

THE LAST LEAF

A near neighbor of mine was Mr. Matthias Power, an ex-sergeant of the police, retired on pension, who lived in a neat cottage close to my house.

My old housekeeper told me all about his history, since he came to live in Killanure about eight years previously.

Old Nancy dilated at length on the subject of his chivalrous devotion and respectful attentions to his young wife.

After his wife's death he centered all his affections in this child. She was everything to him now, and as she grew up she displayed more and more the graces of her dead mother.

The neighbors told me that when Lucy was able to go to school it was with great reluctance that the old man agreed to let her out of his sight even for a few hours daily.

Of course I was not long in the parish without making the acquaintance of my interesting neighbors.

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It happened that I was changed from Killanure some few months after little Lucy's death, but during that time I frequently visited Matthias Power's cottage, and tried by every means to console and cheer him in his loneliness.

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proved to be of that delusive kind which "keeps the word of promise to our ears and breaks it to our hope." God, in the inscrutable way of His divine Providence, which are not our ways, had decreed that this virgin lili should not run the risk of being soiled or sullied by the usages of this rude world.

It was my sad duty to attend her in this illness, and the memory of it will, I think, haunt me always. It is associated with sadness no doubt—sadness tender, pathetic and yet strangely soothing.

When she fully realized the dangerous nature of this second illness her resignation was admirable and very edifying. She professed herself perfectly willing and ready to die.

Towards the end she became delirious and raved a good deal, and sang snatches of the hymns she used to sing in the children's choir.

When the bereaved father fully realized that his heart's treasure had left him—and the dead lips pressed his hand for a long time ere he felt their fatal coldness—his grief was pitiable in the extreme; ay, all the more pitiable for being undemonstrative and silent.

The whole scene reminded me strongly of Dickens' description of the death of little Nell, and her grandfather's inconsolable grief for her loss—a scene said by some to be the most touching and pathetic thing in literature.

He was precise of speech, but reticent; although he would always reply, I noticed, to little Lucy's questions, however trivial they might be; and he could listen with a pleased expression to her artless babble, as if her voice possessed for him the charms of sweetest music.

I noticed how the stern, sad face of the fond father relaxed into a smile when he looked with pride and joy on the sunny countenance of her who hung on his arm; and the thought crossed my mind sometimes, as I watched them going thus for their evening walk—with a whole-hearted abjectness, needless to say—what would become of that man should God call home that angel-child in the first flush of her baptismal innocence to join her little brother in the better land?

She was in reality a most beautiful girl, well grown for her age, and having all the appearance of perfect, buoyant health. She was gifted also with intelligence of a high order. Her features were almost faultlessly perfect and pleasing; eyes of cerulean blue, rippling brown hair, cheeks mantling with the roses of health and vigor.

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David Sands' Wolfskin Cap

A long, cold winter was closing in a late spring at Kull's, a new settlement on the extreme frontier, in one of the Northwestern States. A few petty clearings were scattered round, like windows letting daylight into the dim forest.

Several days of warm rain and thaw put the streams in flood, and made the roads black streaks of mud. Then followed freezing weather, enough to crust the mud, so that walking was good, but teams and wheels would break through.

On top of this an inch of snow covered the treacherous surface. The district school at Kull's held its "spell-down and declamation" fortnightly on Friday evenings.

Three miles to school all winter long, over a lonely road, through thick woods, sometimes wading the whole distance through unbroken snow, did not seem much to a strong, resolute frontier boy.

Often on his way home after dark David heard wolves howl and wild-cats scream close to his path. Pioneer school-boys in the first years of a frontier settlement need to be hardy and fearless.

Peter Kull was post-master, merchant, landlord and justice of the peace. The post-office and the store and the hotel and the stage office and the justice's court were all in one room of the little log hotel.

Next day I met him coming out of the church, and it was with difficulty I recognized him as the Matthias Power of seven years ago. He was sadly changed; thin, haggard, ghostly in appearance, careless in dress and weak and shambling in gait.

"I don't you remember Father O'Carroll," I said, "who attended little Lucy long ago?" "Oh, little Lucy," he answered, "little Lucy is it? She's up there"—pointing heavenward—"waiting for me, with Kate and little Matt; and I'm soon going to them, ay, soon, please God!"

"The last leaf," I soliloquized. "Verily, the last leaf!" "What is that?" said my companion, who evidently had not read Oliver Wendell Holmes' beautiful poem, "The Last Leaf."

In the light she showed herself a young girl with a bright face and pleasant manner. "I'm Janet Fingar," she said. "I expected that there would be some one from Uncle Horace Fingar's here to meet me."

"No, he didn't. No mail came last week on account of the freshets." "I don't know what to do." "Best thing you can do is to come in and eat supper. It's waiting. Dave can tell you all about your uncle's folks, and you'll stay here all night and your uncle can come for you to-morrow."

"No, I must go to uncle's to-night. The freshets have kept me travelling two whole days longer than grandma calculated, and it's cost all my money. I was to have three dollars left when I got here, but it's all gone. I had to pay the last cent for stage fare this morning. So I went without dinner, and I can't take supper or stay here to-night."

"Why, of course you can; it's only three miles. But it's going to be dark in the woods, and the wolves will howl like everything." "Will there be any danger, Mrs. Kull?" "Well, all the men-folks brag that there isn't any danger to speak of in wolves and wildcats, but none of 'em will ever catch me out in the woods o' nights. Maybe the ugly creatures won't bite, but they make noises fit to scare a nervous body nigh into spasms. You'd much better stay here with me."

"But Janet was determined, and David, liking her spirit and glad to have company, encouraged her. He even borrowed the sled of a school-mate on which to drag her small trunk." "As soon as David and Janet were in the woods they began to hear distant howlings. But they were walking and talking briskly, and paid little heed. They had gone more than a mile when a startling clamor burst out directly ahead of them. The David girl stopped the sled."

"Oh-h! Was that wolves?" "Yes, but don't be scared. Noise doesn't hurt. There was quite a bunch gathered close to the road for something, and when our lantern-light shone past 'em, they just howled and scooted."

"Well, I hope that's the last of 'em." "Tisn't, though. When I pass the swamp, a mile ahead, they always get out the band and give me a concert." "As they advanced the howling began again, at first a solitary voice here and there, then others, frequent and far-spread. Suddenly a wild cry, like the scream of a strong child in mortal anguish, rang from the nearest border of the swamp."

"What was that?" said Janet, clutching David. "Wildcat up a tree. Lots of them in the swamp. They're the most dreadful swearers with the least real fight, in all these woods." "Presently they were past the swamp. But now, for the first time since they left the settlement, David seemed in a hurry."

"Come on," he said. "We've only got about a mile further to go. Can you stand it? It's a little way?" "Yes. But why?" "I don't like some of these howls behind us. Don't you notice that they're different in sound? Most of 'em are just each wolf's general challenge. But some are howling the call for a pack to chase game. Don't be scared, though. They don't dare actually attack folks, but the sooner we get home the sooner we'll be out of worry."

They trotted till Janet's breath was spent. Then David halted a moment where it to father had once out some handspikes. One, selected as too small, was still there, and David hastily tied it on top of the trunk. It was at least a formidable club.

Table with 4 columns: DAY OF MONTH, DAY OF WEEK, COLOR OF VESTMENTS, and the text of the liturgical calendar for November 1904, including feast days like All Saints, St. Martin, and the beginning of Advent.

Lighting Fixtures advertisement for McDonald & Willson, Toronto, offering services for electricity and gas.

St. Michael's College advertisement, highlighting its affiliation with Toronto University and offering full classical, scientific, and commercial courses.

Loretto Abbey advertisement, located at Wellington Place, Toronto, offering instruction in various subjects and preparing students for university.

School of Practical Science advertisement, offering departments in engineering, mining, and electrical work, with a focus on practical application.

St. Joseph's Academy advertisement, located at St. Alban Street, Toronto, offering instruction in various subjects and preparing students for university.

Empress Hotel advertisement, located at the corner of Yonge and Gould Streets, Toronto, offering comfortable accommodations and dining.

Centenary of the Concordat article discussing the historical significance of the agreement between the French Republic and the Holy See in 1804.