

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.

He was precise of speech, but reticent; although he would always reply, I noticed, to little Lucy's questions, however trivial they might be.

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.

She was in reality a most beautiful girl, well grown for her age, and having all the appearance of perfect, buoyant health.

Well, toward the end of my third year in the parish an epidemic of scarlatina of a virulent type broke out in the district, and Lucy amongst other school-children contracted it.

proved to be of that delusive kind which "keeps the word of promise to our ears and breaks it to our hope."

It was my sad duty to attend her in this illness, and the memory of it will, I think, haunt me always.

When she fully realized the dangerous nature of this second illness her resignation was admirable and very edifying.

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; and 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.

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

"Welcome be the will of God," he said. "Aye, welcome a thousand times! And God forgive me if I am not as resigned as I ought to be under my heavy trials!"

It was fully seven years before I saw Matthias Power again. I returned to my old home on a visit to a very particular friend, then the curate of the Mountain Parish.

He looked broken-hearted, in truth, and, verily, years older than he did a few months ago.

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.

Several days of warm rain and thaw put the streams in flood, and made the roads black streaks of mud.

Often on his way home after dark David heard wolves howl and wild-cats scream close to his path.

When the stage horn was finally heard about 9 o'clock in the evening, the "spell-down" was promptly dismissed and everybody hurried to the post-office.

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.

"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!"

His face wore a mild, calm, untroubled expression, as he said these words; and his sunken eyes brightened as he shuffled off his boots, muttering to himself, or perhaps communing with the spirit world.

"The last leaf," I soliloquized. "Verily, 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."

"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."

"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."

"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 scouted."

"Tisn't, though. When I pass the swamp, a mile ahead, they always get out the band and give me a concert."

"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."

"I'm not scared, though. They don't dare actually attack folks, but the sooner we get home the sooner we'll be out of worry."

Here, despite her caution, Janet broke through the thin crust and fell. Instantly the nearest and boldest leader of the pack dashed at her.

Calendar for November 1904. Includes days of the month, day of the week, color of vestments, and feast days such as All Saints, Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, and the beginning of Advent.

Lighting Fixtures advertisement for McDonald & Willson, Toronto. Offers electric and gas church work as a specialty.

St. Michael's College advertisement. Located in Toronto, offering full classical, scientific, and commercial courses. Specializes in preparing students for university matriculation.

Loretto Abbey advertisement. Located at Wellington Place, Toronto. Offers instruction in various subjects and is noted for its educational quality.

School of Practical Science advertisement. Located in Toronto, offering departments in engineering, mining, mechanical and electrical engineering, architecture, and analytical and applied chemistry.

ST. JOSEPH'S Academy advertisement. Located at St. Alban Street, Toronto. Offers instruction in various subjects and is noted for its educational quality.

EMPIRE HOTEL advertisement. Located at the corner of Yonge and Gould Streets, Toronto. Offers electric cars from the Union Station every three minutes.

Centenary of the Concordat advertisement. Discusses the historical significance of the Concordat between France and the Papacy, and the centenary of its signing in 1804.