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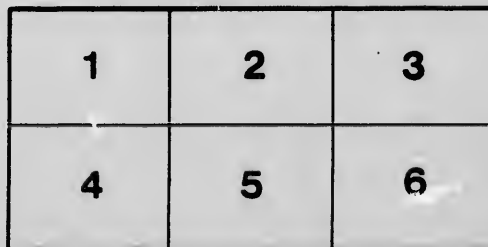
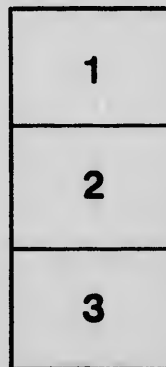
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WILLY BURKE;

OR.

THE IRISH ORPHAN IN AMERICA.

BY

MRS. J. SADLIER.

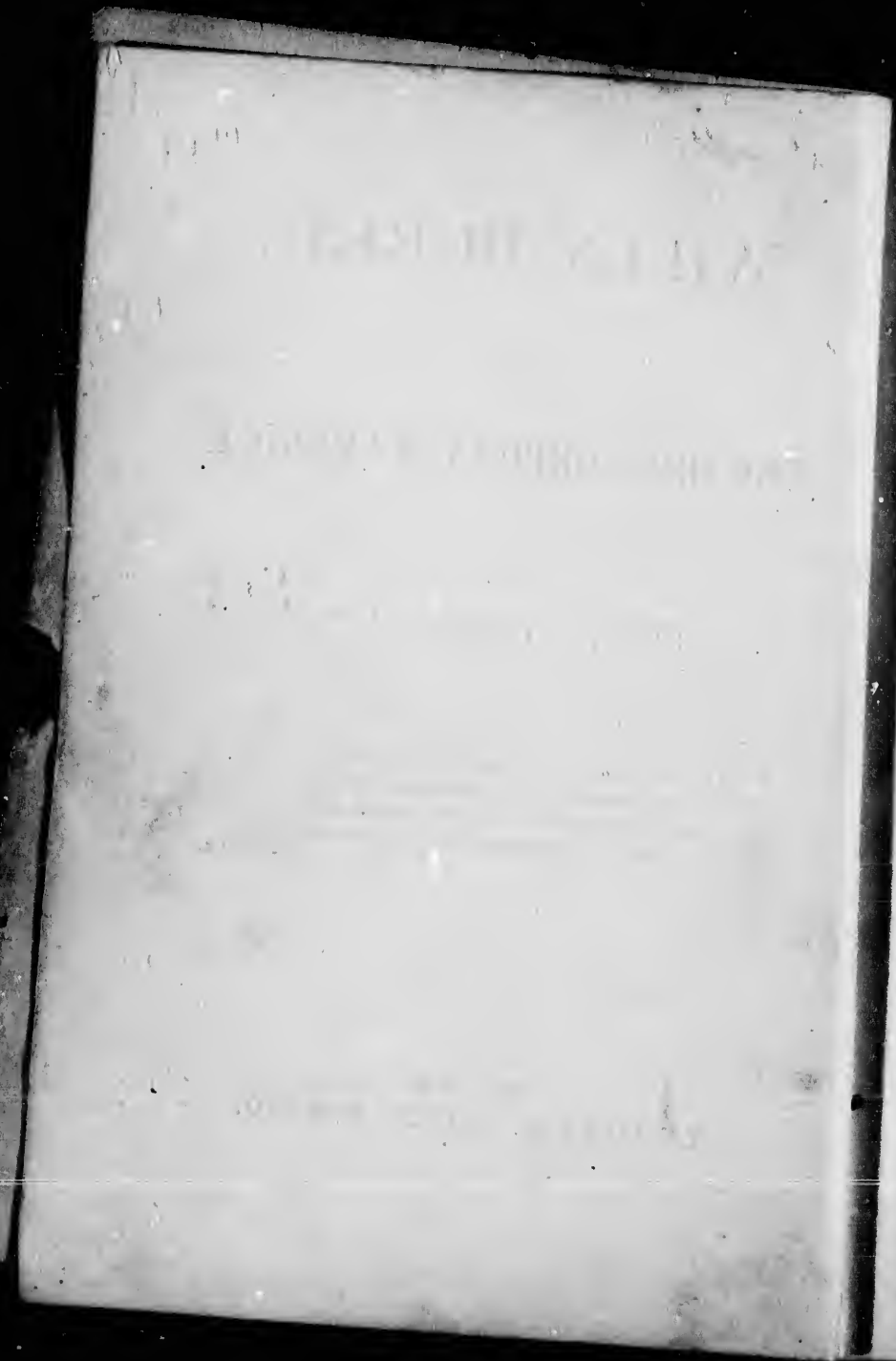
"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor."

—GRAY.

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PREFACE.

THIS little work was written for the express purpose of being useful to the young sons of my native land, in their arduous struggle with the tempter, whose nefarious design of bearing them from the faith of their fathers is so artfully concealed under every possible disguise. The most plausible pretence is, that men make their way better in this money-seeking world, by becoming Protestants; and the fallacy of this saying I have endeavored to show, by proving that a man may be a good Catholic, a sincere Christian,—and yet obtain both wealth and honor even here below. If my young countrymen would all take Willy Burke for their model—humble as he is—I will venture to promise that the Irish in America would soon become wealthy, esteemed, and respected; for we are told by our Divine Master, that if we “seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, all things else shall be added thereto.” The exiled children of Ireland have a noble part to play over all the earth,—that of spreading the true faith; and they should never forget that this glorious prerogative

has been earned for them by the ages of suffering and persecution which their fathers have endured for the sake of conscience and religion. Let every Irish Catholic who is thrown early on the world's wide waste, remember this great, this all-important truth, and practise the lesson to be found in these unpretending pages.

Montreal, November, 1850.

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WILLY BURKE.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEPARTURE FROM IRELAND, AND DEATH AT SEA.

IT was a sorrowful day in a certain parish of the county Tipperary, when Andy Burke, one of the principal farmers of the district, set out with his numerous family for "the land of the Far West." In their day of prosperity, Andy Burke and his worthy helpmate had been public benefactors—the comforts by which they were surrounded were liberally shared with their poorer neighbors, and their house had ever afforded a shelter for the houseless wanderer. Like Goldsmith's curate, "the long remember'd beggar was *their* guest" year after year, and the warmest nook in the wide kitchen was ever reserved for the poor wayfarer. Their children had grown up amid the prayers and blessings of the poor, and now when the hand of misfortune weighed heavily on them all—when the good farmer found it

necessary to emigrate with his family to America, in order to procure for them some sort of establishment—the event was regarded as a calamity in which the whole neighborhood shared. In those days (some twenty years ago) emigration was not what it now is, and he or she who set out for a land beyond the sea, was regretted almost as though the grave were about to shut him in forever. It is true that America was then regarded by our simple peasantry as “a land flowing with milk and honey”—or, to speak less metaphorically, as the land of gold and silver, where wealth rolled on in a ceaseless stream, and to be caught, needed but to reach out the hand. But then the penalty—the dread penalty—which must first be paid;—the separation from home and country—the dangers of the ocean, fearfully exaggerated in the mouths of rustic narrators, and the length of time which it then took to perform the voyage—all these conspired to make it an undertaking of great difficulty and much danger, and, El Dorado as it was, it had but few charms for either Burke or his wife. The latter especially had many and sad misgivings as to the result of the step they were about taking, and to the very last she could scarcely bring herself to look forward with hope. It was the Sunday evening before their departure when the worthy couple sat down together in melancholy mood, talking over the matter so often discussed before.

"Well, after all, Andy," said his wife, "I can't help thinkin' that it would have been as well, ay, an' better, for us to stay at home, where, if we came to trouble or desolation, we'd have the old neighbors and friends about us to comfort us."

"An' sure there's ne'er a one knows that better than myself, Biddy, *asthore machree*," said Andy, as he took the pipe from his mouth and laid it on the hob (*i. e.* back-stone) beside him, "but then, as I often told you before, this poor old country's growin' every day worse an' worse, an' where's the prospect for a large family risin' up about us? Sure, as it is now, it's just all we can do to pay the landlord and the tithe-proctor, and all the rest, so that we're only workin' the skin off our bones for them that doesn't thank us; and when the boys an' the girls are grown up, what have they before them here but a life of hard labor, an' nothin' for it — that's the worst of all. No, no, *agra!* for their sakes we must go to the strange country, while we have a little money in our hands; for if we waited some time longer it 'id slip through our fingers, and leave us without the means of goin' anywhere."

"Well, I know it's all true enough, Andy, dear," replied Biddy with a heavy sigh, "an' I'm not the one to gainsay what I know is God's truth, but then wouldn't it be better to live in poverty here, where we have our chapel an' our priest within a mile of us — an' where

we have the comfort of seein' good Christians all about us, than to be livin' ever so grand in a strange country, where they say you'd may-be have to travel hundreds o' miles without seein' a priest or an altar? Sure, wouldn't it be better to see the children beggin' their bread, or livin' on some good Christian's floor, for their bit an' sup, than to endanger the loss of their souls? Isn't the blessin' o' God, an' the happiness of livin' in his holy church, beyond all the riches in the world?"

"True enough, Biddy, true enough, an' sure it's yourself has always the good thought with you, but there's no use frettin' about it now when everything is ready to set out in the mornin'." Here some of the children ran in to say that Father Maloney was coming up the *boreen*, whereupon there was a general move, and all went to the door to receive the priest, who had come on purpose to pay a farewell visit, and leave his benediction with a family which stood so high in his estimation. It was now drawing towards evening, and one after another the neighbors entered, each one reverently saluting the priest, and having received a friendly word or smile, retired to where some friend was seated, if possible, near some of the Burke family, who were of course the objects of all attention. Around the wide hearth was drawn a circle consisting of the priest, Andy Burke and his wife, and some ten or twelve of the older neighbors, of both sexes. The re-

mainder of the large kitchen was crowded with young people — boys and girls, men and women — while here and there amongst them might be seen the young sons and daughters of the house, each forming the centre of a little group. And the children, amazed at finding themselves suddenly so important, waxed forward and loquacious, and chatted away more flippantly than they had ever done before. About nightfall a stir was visible about the door, giving reason to suppose that some distinguished arrival had taken place, and a voice was heard, saying, "Arrah, then, Tommy Cooney, will you just take your long legs out o' the master's road? Mrs. Burke, ma'am, here's Master Dogherty, but the sorra bit o' him can get in, at all at all!" A way was instantly made for the honored guest, and Biddy herself came forward with both hands outstretched, and a cordial "God save you, master!" "God save you kindly, Mrs. Burke!" was the old man's quick reply, as she led him up to a seat beside the priest; "sure I came to see the last of the boys and girls, and to give ye all an old man's blessing — where are the little ones?"

"Here, master," — and "here" — and "here" — and before the worthy pedagogue could find time to make a suitable reply to Father Maloney's friendly salutation, he found himself surrounded by the younger children, four in number, while the two elder, a boy and a girl,

hung timidly back, awaiting their turn to receive the honor of the master's notice. Even when the good man had taken the seat placed for him by Biddy, he had one of the children on either knee, caressing each in turn.

"God knows, your reverence," said the school-master, addressing the priest, "God knows, this family is a loss to the whole parish, for old and young of them were an example to all—sure I may say it now, as they're going away from me, I hadn't the like of these children in my school; and I declare to you, Father Maloney, I loved them as if they were my own flesh and blood."

"I do not at all doubt it, Mr. Dogherty," rejoined the priest; "and I have only, for my part, to wish that they may continue, when in a foreign land, as good and docile as you and I have ever found them. To this end we have to pray that God may spare to them their worthy parents."

"An' I hope, children," said Master Dogherty, while his voice trembled with emotion, "an' I hope ye'll not forget the poor old man that taught ye how to read your prayer-books—an' that ye'll remember him in your prayers—an' never be ashamed of your country, as they say some grow to be, but always be proud of being born in poor old Ireland, because it was, ay, and it is, the Island of Saints;—and above all, children, ye'll be mindful of the old faith—the old religion that ye learned here at

home; for ye may be sure that if ye forget it, or let yourselves be drawn away from it, ye have no chance for happiness in the world to come. Think of this, an' remember what ye have often heard his reverence here say from the altar, that "*there is but the one thing necessary.*" Each of ye has but one soul, an' if you lose it what will become of you?"

The children listened with downcast eyes, while not only their parents, but all the immediate auditors, were affected even to tears by the touching solemnity of the old man's accents. Meanwhile there was a running fire of question and answer going on at the lower end of the kitchen. Many stories were told of wonderful fortunes made in a short time in America, and of marvellous adventures which there befell sundry persons mentioned. Excited by these narratives, many of the young people were heard to wish that they had the means of going. "An' it isn't the money, either, that 'id keep me at home," said one young fellow, "for, with God's help, I could raise as much an 'id take me, but then the old mother yonder 'id never hear of my goin', and troth, if it wasn't for her I'd be off with the Burkes."

"An' me too, Ned," cried Larry Gallagher, his friend and neighbor, "only my father wouldn't hear tell of it — he says it's an unnatural thing to leave poor old Ireland, where we were bred an' born, an' our generations afore

us. But maybe he'd give in some day, after all, an' then it 'id be 'hey for America,' — an' I'd have my share o' the gold, or I'd know for what — bedad I would."

As the family were to start before daylight the following morning, their beds were all packed up; and though they had been solicited with genuine Irish warmth to bestow themselves for the night on various of the neighbors, yet they declined, thinking it useless to seek repose which must have been so very short. It was, however, arranged that the younger children should sleep in the next house, and accordingly they were sent early to bed, — not, however, before the priest had given his blessing to the whole family. About nine o'clock, Father Maloney took an affectionate leave of those whom, as he said, he was in all probability to meet no more on this side the grave, and it was observed, as he raised his hand over the head of each individual, and breathed an inward prayer, only perceptible by the motion of his lips, that his aged eyes, when he raised them to heaven, were dim with tears. When he turned to go away, he found that all present were kneeling in expectation of his blessing; and as he passed along he made the sign of the cross, invoking the divine benediction on these humble, faithful Christians — so sublime in the trusting earnestness of their devotion. He had almost reached the door when Andy Burke's second son, a boy of

eleven or twelve years old, was clinging to his coat.

"I want you to bless me again, Father Maloney," and the tears were chasing each other over the child's rosy cheeks. "An' I hope you'll pray for me, and daddy, and mammy, and all of us," he added, "when we're far away from you."

"God bless you, my boy! God bless you, and mark you with grace!—you have always been a good, dutiful child, and may you continue to be a consolation to your poor parents in the strange land whither they and you are going! Be assured, Willy, that if my poor prayers can obtain favor for you all from Almighty God, they shall not be wanting." The good man spoke in a thick, husky voice, and he hastened away, evidently desirous to hide his emotion.

The rest of the company declared their intention of remaining over-night, so as to accompany the Burkes some miles of the way on the following morning, and the night-hours passed away in sad but friendly conversation. About the middle of the night the Rosary was said, being read aloud by Master Dogherty, and responded to by all present, young and old. It was, and still is, the pious custom of our people to approach the sacraments immediately before their departure from Ireland; and this consoling duty had been faithfully performed by the family in question, who had

all, with the exception of the youngest child, (who was only six years old,) received the holy communion on that memorable Sunday in their parish church, and from the revered hands of Father Maloney. Beautiful is the piety — the simple and unostentatious piety of the peasantry of Ireland — beautiful when at home in “*their* own loved island of sorrow ;” — it sustains their sinking souls in poverty, and hardship, and grievous privation, — and not less lovely it is, when we find it strengthening and fortifying their souls against temptation in the foreign land, where perchance it is treated with ridicule and contempt by the half-infidel scoffers of the world. Ay, still more radiant are then its divine lineaments — its truthfulness — its humility, and its mildness, when brought into contrast with the proud, arrogant, doubting spirit of the age, — the cold, sceptical age in which we live ! It was still dark, on that Monday morning, when the comfortable homestead of Andy Burke was left to utter loneliness — when the family that had for so many long years nestled in peace and love beneath its well-smoked roof-tree, set forth as wanderers for a distant, and, to them, unknown country, carrying with them little but the hoarded faith of their fathers, and the love and respect of their humble neighbors. Yet these were blessings — great and consoling — and so did Andy Burke and his wife regard them. Like the dove, sent out from the shel-

ter of the ark, they went forth over the world's waste, unknowing where they should find a resting-place; but their souls were in peace amid all their sorrow, for they were filled with an humble yet lively confidence in God. Some of the convoy (as these processions are called) being on foot, went but a few miles of the journey, and then returned home, with many a fervent blessing on the heads of the travellers. Others who were variously mounted, some on horseback, and others on the wheeled cars of the country, accompanied the Burkes to the town whence they were to embark for Liverpool, and it was already noon-day when they all stopped before the steamboat office.

At length the final moment came, and it was one of severe trial. The friendship of years was rent asunder, as though by death; and they who had grown up side by side — whose childhood and youth and maturity had passed together — were now parted, as they sadly felt, "to meet no more on earth." But here again came in the consoling aid of their common faith, and with the parting grasp of the hand were spoken such touching assurances as these: "Well! God be with ye all! — an' sure, when ye are all far away, we'll never let ye out of our minds nor our hearts. With God's help we'll never forget to offer up the Pater and Ave night an' mornin', for your welfare, an' when we're sayin' the Rosary in the chapel above, sure everybody 'ill keep ye in mind.

An' I pray God, Andy Burke an' Biddy, an' children dear, that we may all meet again in the glory of heaven!"

"The Lord's blessin' be about ye, wherever ye go!" said another, with a choking voice; "for sure it's yerselves that earned nothin' else, an' livin' or dead as ye may be, while there's one of *us* alive to offer up a prayer, ye'll have it, from our hearts out. God bless ye, children! and make ye all happy in this world, an' the world to come. Ochone! it's the black sight to many a one to see yer backs turned, an' the old walls left bare an' lonely — an' God he sees that. Sure there's many a creature 'll miss ye sore, an' when they're passin' *the house*, they'll be offerin' up the prayer to God for them that used to have the warm fireside, and the good bit an' sup for them!"

The protracted parting was at last over, and the Burkes, old and young, were fairly embarked, — the father and mother grave and sad, as their tearful gaze rested on the swift receding shores of that land now painfully dear to their aching hearts; the young people gradually losing sight of their sorrow, in the novelty of everything around. The sea, the coast, the lighthouse, the steamboat, and the hundreds of strange faces it bore along over the waters, had all and each the power of weaning their young minds from thoughts of sadness; and it was only when the violent motion of the boat began to sicken them, that they could be

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prevailed upon to leave the deck, and go below. Even the passage of that narrow sea, though already effected by steam, was by no means so rapid as it now is, and the Burkes found it of all but endless duration ; for it chanced that a heavy sea was sweeping through the channel, and its violent heavings affected all, more or less. The sight of Liverpool, (dirty, smoky town that it is,) was a welcome one to them ; and it was with grateful hearts, and a sense of relief, that they found themselves again on the dry, firm land, although it was the land of England.

Next day our emigrants embarked for New York, on board the good ship *Dublin* ; and it appeared as though they set out under favorable auspices, for the weather was fair and tolerably mild, and the long swell of the ocean-wave was but slightly broken by the breeze. Wind and tide were favorable, and the hopes of passengers and crew ran high, in anticipation of a quick and pleasant voyage. There were, however, two individuals on board who looked on the animated scene, without and within the vessel, without catching even the smallest particle of the invigorating spirit which seemed to actuate all around. These were Andy Burke and his wife — the former of whom seemed weighed down by some dark, hidden feeling, which wore him away day by day ; and the latter by fears, newly awakened fears, for her husband's health. To all others,

he seemed as well as he had ever been ; but there was a flush on his wan cheek, and a light in his hollow eye, that could not pass the scrutinizing glance of affection ; and poor Biddy felt her heart sink, as the thought for the first time crossed her mind — “ What would become of us all, if Andy was taken from us ? ”

For some days she kept her fears to herself, dreading lest any expression of them might be injurious to her husband ; but at length she could contain herself no longer, and ventured to ask, “ Andy, *ahagur!* what’s the matter with ye, at all? Sure ye don’t look like the same man since we left Liverpool! If it’s grievin’ ye are for leavin’ home, sure, *aroon!* there’s no use in frettin’ about what can’t be helped, an’ only it was God’s will, we wouldn’t be on the *shaughran* this blessed day, — so, for that reason, we must make the best of it, an’ not murmur, for fear God might afflict us more and more ! ”

“ Well! since ye want to know, Biddy *asthore!* ” returned her husband, “ I’ll just tell ye the truth. Ever since we left home, there’s something over me, an’ I don’t know what it is — I think I’m as well as ever I was, but somehow or another there’s like a heavy weight on my heart — an’ at times it crushes me so that I’m as much dead as alive — whatever’s the reason of it. But somehow, I’m always thinkin’ that I’ll never see the other side ; an’ sure, God help me ! that same wouldn’t trouble

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“Tut, tut, man!” said his wife, affecting a tone of remonstrance, though she found it difficult to restrain her tears, on hearing her own secret forebodings echoed back from her husband's heart. “Sure, it's a shame to hear a sensible man talkin' that way. It's the black grief, I tell you, that's makin' you so down-hearted, an' it doesn't become a God-fearin' man to be so easy cast down. With the help of God, we'll both live to see the children well settled in America, an' then it's no matter how soon we're taken home, for, God knows, there's no great pleasure to be expected in this world. Keep up your heart, then, Andy! for the love o' God, do! not to speak o' myself an' the poor creatures that's dependin' on you!” A sorrowful shake of the head was Andy's reply; and, as some of the children drew near at the moment, the subject was dropped for that time.

Alas! these gloomy presentiments were all too soon realized, for Andy visibly declined, and day after day saw him grow paler and thinner, and more dejected. At length he was forced to keep his bed, and a hectic fever set in, which very soon exhausted his remaining strength, and left not a shadow of hope for his recovery. Even poor Biddy, though she had bravely struggled against despair while the slightest possibility existed that her hus-

band might still be spared, even *she* was at last driven to confess that hope had vanished ; and in the fulness of her grief she gathered her children around her, and told them the dreadful tidings. Her voice was broken by choking sobs, but her young auditors were not slow in catching the fatal import of her words, knowing, as they did, that their beloved father was very, very ill. From that moment they nestled around his bed with redoubled fondness, each vying with the other who should minister to his wants, and anticipate his wishes. Yet they had been warned by their mother not to make any show of grief ; and it was a touching sight to see the self-control which they exercised in consequence. At times, when the elder boys, who were respectively thirteen and eleven, found it impossible to refrain from tears, they would steal away from the bedside of their dying father, and sitting down side by side in some remote corner, they would give free vent to their sorrow. The young ones would from time to time draw near their mother, with stealthy caution, and whisper in her ear, "I think daddy's better to-day — don't you see how red his cheeks are?" A burst of tears was the only answer ; for Biddy well knew that death was rapidly doing his work, and that the glow on the emaciated face was but the flush of internal disease.

It chanced that the ship, though leaving her port under auspices so favorable, was much

retarded in her progress by strong western gales, so that, though she had no very great storm to encounter, yet the voyage was a rough and tedious one. For seven long weeks was she kept buffeting about on the wide ocean, without making any considerable progress, and eight weeks had passed since "the last glimpse of Erin" had disappeared from the eyes of the emigrants, when one morning, just as the shades of night were vanishing from sky and sea, Bidy Burke awoke her younger children from their sleep, and made a sign for them to rise—she could not speak. Hastily donning their little garments, the wondering children followed their mother—it was but a few paces—to their father's bed, where they found their two brother's kneeling, with their faces hid between their hands. A scream burst forth from the little ones as they looked at the bed, for their father lay still, as though he were dead, and the ghastly paleness of his face was fearful to see. He was not dead, however, though his hour was just then come, and the voice of his children woke him from his lethargic slumber. "Kneel down, all of ye!" he said, in a feeble voice, "till I give ye my blessin'—God help ye, poor children, I haven't much else to leave ye!" When the whole sorrowful group knelt before him, the mother as well as the children, the dying man raised his clasped hands to heaven, and breathed an inward prayer that the God of the widow and the orphan might

protect them through life, and guide them to a happy eternity. Then, stretching out his right hand, he made the sign of the cross over their heads, murmuring, "The blessin' o' the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, an' Holy Ghost—be upon ye all, and may the good and merciful God bring us all together again, in the kingdom of his glory! An' now, listen to your father, children, for the last time on earth! I'm not able to say much, but ye'll mind what I tell ye—I trust in God ye will! Hush your cryin' an' sobbin' now for a little while, for ye'll have time enough for that when I'm gone." There was, in a moment, a profound silence, and the dying Christian spoke again, though frequently obliged to stop from excessive weakness.

"You'll soon land in a strange country, children, where ye'll have to work your way through as best ye can. An' though it's God's will that ye'll have no father to do for ye, or to watch over ye, still he leaves ye, in his mercy, a wise an' lovin' mother, and my dyin' advice is, that next to God above, ye'll love and honor *her*. Never do anything without her consent, or without consultin' her, and then ye'll be sure to do well. An' now I'll give ye the same charge that my own father gave to me with his dyin' lips: Be faithful to God, an' love an' obey his holy church, an' never be ashamed of your religion; for if ye do, God will reject you in this world, and in the world

to come! Now, God's blessin' an' mine be about ye all. Bidly, asthore!" he said, after a pause, but he spoke so low that she was obliged to bend down to catch his words, "it would give me great consolation if I could only receive the rites o' the church; but God sees all things, an' he sees how it grieves me that I can't have that happiness. But when you get to New York, Bidly, dear, ye'll not forget to have some Masses offered up for me, that God may have mercy on my poor soul! — don't cry, *agra machre!* I see you can't speak, — but I know you'll do as I say; there now, put that little crucifix in my hand, — that'll do, ahagur. Christ Jesus have mercy on me, — Mother of Jesus pray for me, — sweet Lord, take me home to my eternal rest." There was a dead silence for some minutes, — not even the youngest child was heard to utter a sound. Many of the passengers knelt around, but all were silent. Bidly bent down over the dying man, and held in her breath to listen, but all was still; suddenly one deep, convulsive sigh issued from the half-closed lips, — a shiver ran through the whole body, so that even the bed-clothes were seen to quiver, and then all was over. "May the Lord have mercy on your soul, for now it's gone before the judgment-seat!" cried the poor bereaved wife, as her tears, long suppressed, now burst forth, and fell like rain on the pale, shrunken face of the dead. Then, as her children echoed her cry,

and burst into wild lamentations, "Ay! we may cry now, children, dear, for we'll not disturb him *now*,— we may cry, *farear agar!* but it'll do us no good,— it'll not bring back the soul that's gone. But what am I doin' at all?" she said, suddenly falling on her knees; "what am I about, that I'm not prayin' for him, an' him before the Judge this blessed minute? Kneel down, children! an' ye, good people all! an' let us offer up our prayers for him!"

Though her voice was failing at every word, she nevertheless went bravely on, and offered up her prayers with fervor and devotion; her children, and all the sympathizing spectators, joined in the performance of that sacred duty.

During the day and night that poor Andy Burke was waked, if sympathy could have alleviated the sorrow of those whom his death made desolate, it surely was not wanting; for those who had never seen one of the family till they met on board the vessel, were drawn to them by so great a calamity, and did all that the place and circumstances permitted to testify their deep and heartfelt sympathy. But though the poor widow was sincerely grateful for so much spontaneous kindness, yet it could not draw her from her lethargy of woe. Hour after hour she sat by the bed-head, rocking to and fro with that peculiar motion, so expressive of hopeless grief, only seen, I believe, amongst our more humble countrywomen, — her clasped hands resting on

her knees, and her tearless eyes fixed on the rigid features of the dead. All the elder children seemed nearly as much afflicted as their mother; but however touching was the silent sorrow of the group, it was not half so much so as the all but unconsciousness of the two youngest, who, though somewhat subdued by the sight of so much grief, yet ran about as usual, and ate whatever was offered them with just as good a relish. At times they would peep in between the others, where they sat around the bed, and for the moment they would seem sensible that their father was indeed dead; but once out of sight of that mournful spectacle, the impression was speedily effaced.

That long, melancholy night was at length past, and the hour arrived when the mortal remains of poor Andy Burke were to be committed to the deep. Weak and worn as Biddy was, she could not be persuaded from helping to prepare the corpse for burial. Herself put on the shroud prepared for him; but when the sailors came to sew up the corpse in its canvas coffin, she resigned her place with shrinking horror, for the operation appeared an unnatural one to her. She had previously called her children to take their final leave of the dead, herself giving the example by imprinting a long, last kiss on the blue, ice-cold lips. This sorrowful ceremony over, the *De Profundis*, and the usual prayers, were read aloud by

a young ecclesiastic who happened to be on board, (on his way to be ordained in New York for the American mission,) whereupon the body was carried aloft, the family of the deceased following closely, and after them the greater number of the passengers. The mournful procession having reached the stern, ropes were thrown around the sheeted corpse in order to lower it from the ship's side; but the widow, darting forward, threw herself on her knees beside it, and implored them to wait yet a moment. The hood of her cloak was thrown over her head, so that her face could not be distinctly seen; but enough was visible to show that she was pale as the corpse itself, and that her eyes were swollen with weeping, though now dry and tearless. "Oh! Andy! Andy!" she murmured in a low, wailing tone, "it's little we thought when we were leavin' home that this 'id be the way with us! An' sure my heart would not be half so sore, *acushla!* if ye were a-buryin' in the old churchyard at home, where your forefathers lie, — but och! wirra, wirra! to see you a-throwin' out into the deep ocean, instead o' bein' covered up in consecrated ground, — och, its unnatural, unnatural! But then," she added, suddenly recollecting herself, as faith came with its consoling whisper, "but then, what is the poor body, after all? an' sure God can raise ye up at the last day, as bright and beautiful as if ye had been sleepin' in the quiet earth! Fare-

well, then, till we meet again! an' I hope, in the mercy o' God, that it 'ill be before his throne, to live in his blessed kingdom forever an' ever. Amen!" This last word of her simple prayer was echoed from hundreds of hearts: the children gathered close around their mother, and the corpse was raised aloft; a wild cry broke from the bereaved ones as it was lowered into the deep, — poor Biddy covering her eyes to shut out the horrid sight, — one heavy splash was heard, the body of poor Andy Burke was far down amid the waters, and the vessel was moving rapidly on her course. The widow was almost carried down the gangway steps, (by some whose tearful eyes attested their sincere sympathy,) for she was literally more dead than alive, being entirely exhausted by long watching and heart-wearing affliction. Her children followed close behind, helping each other along as best they could.

CHAPTER II.

POVERTY AND TEMPTATION.

TWELVE months had passed away since Mrs. Burke and her children had landed in New York ; months of trial and of sorrow they had been, for the desolate widow had found it hard to support her children with her small means, and, unfriended as she was, she had sought in vain for some employment that might enable her to keep her trifling funds in reserve. Sickness and death, too, had been busy amongst her little flock, for her two youngest children had one after the other pined away and died, and were calmly sleeping in the quiet churchyard. Their death was a severe trial for the mother's heart, (as it ever is to lose a beloved child under any circumstances,) but when reason and religion had exerted their mild influence on her soul; she acknowledged with a grateful heart that God had given her a new proof of his love, in thus taking to himself her fatherless children ere yet they had been subjected to the fire of tribulation, or their pure hearts contaminated by the vices of the world. Just about the end of

the first year of widowhood she obtained the washing of a few families of respectable standing, and, through their influence, others were induced to give her employment. Her two eldest children, being boys, could do nothing, it is true, to assist their mother in the house; but the two girls, although only ten and eight respectively, were so docile, and so industrious, that they did much to lighten her labor. Neat and tidy they were, too; and it did their mother's heart good to see how cheerfully and willingly they went about their work. After a little time, the eldest boy, Peter, obtained a situation as errand-boy in a commercial establishment; and his earnings, trifling though they might be, were a sensible assistance to his mother, to whom they were duly and regularly given up. Hitherto our old acquaintance, Willy, had been of a remarkable cheerful, lively disposition, but about this time his mother remarked that he became silent and pensive, as though something weighed heavily on his young mind. At first she thought that this might proceed from the loneliness attending his brother's absence, as they were now for the first time separated. But when she came to talk to him on the subject, he warmly replied, "No, no, mother, dear! it isn't that; sure, I'm glad an' proud that Peter has got somethin' to do, because it's a help to you, and it gives him pleasure to be doin' somethin' for you an' us all; but when I see

him comin' in on Saturday night, an' puttin' the money that he made all the week into your hands, an' when I hear you blessin' him, an' callin' him a good boy, sure it makes myself sorry that I have nothing to give you, an' that in place of bein' a help, like my brother, it's that I'm a burden to you!"

The mother threw her arms round the boy's neck, and kissed his fair forehead with more than usual tenderness: "An' sure it's just like you, Willy, darlin', to talk that way, for God has always marked you with grace, but you mustn't let such thoughts into your head, good or bad, because you're too young yet to do much for any one; an' in place o' your goin' to look for work, poor child! it's thinkin' of sendin' you to school I am. If you had a year or two's more learnin', then you'd be better able to work your way through the world. You can read well enough, I know that, an' thanks be to God for it! but you see you can hardly write your name; an' if I could afford it any way at all, I'd like to send you to school. Sure they tell me there's schools here where they teach children for next to nothing."

Poor Willy said nothing, but he sighed heavily; and seeing that the fire was burned low on the hearth, he went quietly to work to kindle it anew, for one of his mother's washing-pots hung from the crook. Mrs. Burke wiped away a tear with the corner of her apron, for she saw that her favorite boy was unhappy, and her

maternal heart could not but sympathize with his sadness, proceeding, as it did, from the purest and best source. She turned away in silence to pursue her work, and for that time the matter went no farther.

Worn and pale she was, poor woman! and at times far from strong; but still she toiled on cheerfully, and none might read on her placid face one thought of discontent, — one corroding regret for days of happiness gone forever, days when comfort and plenty were in and around her dwelling, and when she had the means of dispensing good things to others who were not so highly blessed. Every morning, her first care was to hear Mass in the neighboring cathedral, after which she commenced her daily toil with cheerful alacrity, for she had offered it to God, and did all for His sake. As she always went to the earliest Mass, so, in winter, it was before the dawn, and she generally took Willy with her, naturally disliking to traverse the streets alone at an unseasonable or unseemly hour. Thus the boy acquired a habit which he found one of incalculable profit and consolation amid the trials of a strangely chequered life, when that pious mother who had thus early led him to the foot of the altar had been long mouldering in the grave.

It chanced one day that Willy accompanied his mother when she went to the house of one of her employers; and the lady being much pleased with the boy's appearance, and his

quiet, respectful manner when spoken to, observed that it was a pity so fine a lad should not have the advantages of education.

"I should like to help you along, Mrs. Burke!" she said, with a gracious smile, "for I believe you to be a good, industrious person, and therefore I shall take this boy under my own care. He shall be sent to one of the best schools in the city, so that he may, if so inclined, make up for lost time; and when he is a few years older, he shall be taken into my husband's counting-house, as junior clerk, where he will have a good salary. What say you, Mrs. Burke?"

"What can I say, ma'am, but that I'm entirely obliged to you for makin' such an offer, an' from my heart out I thank you. Only it wouldn't become his mother to speak so much in his praise, I'd be makin' free to tell you, ma'am, that I hope ye'll find him a good boy, an' a thankful one. With God's help I'll get his little things ready an' send him as soon as I can. But won't he come home at night, ma'am, for a little time? Maybe it's not long I'd be with the creatures, an' I like to have them about me while I'm in it!"

"Oh certainly, Mrs. Burke! he can go home, if you wish it, every evening, and the sooner you can send him it will be all the better. Good morning; you can go now, for I'm rather hurried this morning."

The poor woman made a low courtesy, and re-

tired with her son. All the way home they could talk or think of nothing but the blessed news they had heard, and tears of joy streamed from the eyes of the fond mother as she painted in glowing language the advantages thus opened to her darling son.

In a few days after, Willy Burke was duly sent to school, dressed, moreover, in an entire new suit, and a proud woman his mother was when she surveyed him in his handsome new clothes, before he set out on Monday morning. When he came home at night, she felt still prouder and happier, for he had several respectable looking volumes, neatly strapped up, and in each of these he was to learn an allotted lesson. When her washing was done, she hastened to get her sewing, and sat down beside Willy where he was studying his lessons, and she was beyond measure gratified to hear the fine descriptions of far-off lands and seas; and even the grammar, though it was all Greek to her, was listened to with a gratified ear, for wasn't it all "fine larnin'" for her boy? The lessons were at last learned, and supper being over, and the Rosary said, Willy and his little sisters went to bed. But it was long before their mother sought that repose which her day of toil rendered so necessary; for, over and above the full half-hour which she nightly devoted to her prayers, she sat for some time on the night in question musing over the past and present,

and indulging in many a bright thought of her children's future.

For about a week matters went on thus: Willy, after coming from school, went about and did all the little jobs that his mother required, did her errands for the next day, and saw that he left nothing undone, then eagerly applied himself to his books, and was soon absorbed in the delightful task of conning over his lessons. But one evening towards the end of the week, he suddenly stopped short in the middle of a phrase, and his mother asked, in alarm, "What is the matter?"

"Why, mother! isn't this odd?" said the boy in reply.

"What is it, dear?"

"Just listen to this, mother!" and he went on to read aloud a passage in his next day's lesson of geography, wherein, according to the custom of modern geographers who write for Protestant schools, the religion of Catholics was strangely enough brought in, daubed and blackened, as incidental to the description of Catholic nations. It was of Ireland that Willy was now learning, and the passage in question was to the effect that Ireland was a beautiful and fertile country, and her people a fine intelligent race, but that they were kept in a state of gross ignorance by the Romish clergy, and were sunk in the grossest superstition, — indolent they were, too, and slovenly in their habits; and all this, together with their miserable

poverty, was unhesitatingly ascribed to "their obstinate attachment to the debasing doctrines of Popery!" "Now isn't that curious, mother? an' then they say here in another place, that wherever the priests of the Church of Rome have power over the people, it's just the same!"

The wan face of the widow was flushed with a crimson glow as she listened; and when Willy had ended, she said in a voice that struggled to be calm, "An' do you know Willy, dear! who them priests are that they're blackenin' that way? — sure aren't they our own priests, darlin', the fathers o' the poor an' the ministers of God's holy church? — our own Father Maloney, that couldn't put bit or sup in his own mouth an' know that anybody wanted it, an' sure there's hundreds o' them like him; oh, God's blessin' be about them all! for sure, bad as the poor creatures in Ireland are, wouldn't they be a thousand times worse only for the priests, that's always ready with the good advice, an' the soft word, an' the help, too, when it's needed?" And here the poor woman's grateful remembrance of "the priests at home," together with her indignation at hearing them so basely calumniated, and not only them, but the divine religion whose ministers they are, all affected her so forcibly that she burst into tears. Suddenly a thought struck her, and hastily drying her eyes, she asked:

"Ah, then, Willy! what kind of a school is

it, at all? Sure I often heard of schools that they had even in Ireland, just a-purpose for leadin' poor Catholic children astray — where they used to make them read the Protestant Bible, an' lyin' books about our holy religion, that they call Popery. Maybe they have them here too, an' that this is one o' them, Eh, alanna! what do you think?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, mother. I think it's nothing else; for we read in the Testament every day, an' you see yourself the kind of books they give us to learn; an' then there was a tall, black-lookin' gentleman came in yesterday, an' he questioned us very closely about what religion we were; an' when I said I was a Catholic, he shook his head, an' said, 'Poor boy! poor boy!' an' then he stroked down my head, and said he'd have some talk with me when he'd come again next week. The boys said he was a minister; an' when I asked them 'does the priest ever come at all?' sure they all burst out laughin', an' began to make game o' me, an' some o' them said, 'Catch a priest in here — that's all; why, the boys alone would hunt him right off!' So when I seen they were all makin' such fun about it, I said nothing, but went on with my writing."

"Well, please God, Willy, you'll never set a foot in their school again; an' I'll take the books, an' the other things that you have here, back to Mrs. Watkins in the mornin'. Sure

they thought we were so ignorant that we wouldn't know nor care anything about religion, but they'll find their mistake, or my name's not Biddy Burke. Oh then, aren't they the sly villains, out an' out — here they'd be makin' us believe that they were givin' you a good education, an' them all the time doin' their best to rob you of what's more precious than silver or gold, or all the learnin' in the world — the blessed an' holy faith that you got from your father, an' him from his ; — may they all rest in heaven, I pray God, this night !”

To this Willy made no opposition ; for the boy had, as I have elsewhere observed, an understanding above his age, and young as he was, he was fully aware that the gift of faith is indeed a priceless blessing ; so, seeing that his mother believed *his* in danger from the one-sided teachings of the school, he cheerfully resigned himself to her will, and though he sighed to have the golden vista of knowledge closed, ere yet he had done more than glanced through the portals, yet the sacrifice was made without a murmur. His mother understood his feelings ; and drawing him towards her, she fondly kissed his cheek. “ Sure, I know it grieves you, darlin', to be taken away from school, just when you were beginnin' to do some good ; but God is merciful, Willy, an' depend upon it, when he knows an' sees that you don't murmur against his holy will, he'll open some other way for you. Maybe Mrs. Watkins didn't

know what kind of a school it was, an' that she'll send you to another, where there'll be no such work goin' on." This idea was consoling to both; and when, in the morning, Mrs. Burke set out with her bundle of books, she was not without a hope that she would have good news for Willy on her return.

When introduced to Mrs. Watkins's presence, she found that lady half reclined on a velvet-covered couch in her luxuriously furnished drawing-room, with her fine person attired in a travelling-dress, she being about to set out on a party of pleasure to the country-seat of one of her friends. At a neighboring window stood her husband, also equipped for the road, and apparently looking anxiously out for the appearance of the servant with the horses.

"Why, Mrs. Burke, what have you got there?" demanded the lady, as she raised herself languidly from her recumbent posture; "is not that a lot of books I see you carry?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Mrs. Burke, "they're the books you were so good as to give Willy when he was goin' to school."

"Well, and is he not using them now?—surely he requires them still?"

"He's not goin' back to that school any more, ma'am," was the quiet answer.

"Not going back to school!" exclaimed Mrs. Watkins, in surprise; "do you mean to

say, good woman, that you do not choose to send him?"

"I can't send him there, ma'am, an' I'll tell you the reason, if you'll please to listen for one minute."

"Well, I declare" said the lady, "this impudence is beyond everything! It is true, I had often heard that you Irish are too lazy and indolent to apply yourselves to learn anything, and that the trouble of keeping your children in proper order for going to school was more than enough for you, — so I find it just the same with you all."

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," said the poor woman, trying to keep in her tears, "it wasn't the trouble at all; for, God knows, I'd be glad to sit up all night, after my day's work, if I had no other way to keep his little things clean an' neat on him for goin' to school, an' indeed it was the joy o' the world to me an' him, poor fellow! for him to get so good a chance, — but sure, ma'am, it isn't a school for Catholics at all; an' I just came here this mornin' to let you know the kind of a place it is, an' the sort of books they had my little boy learnin'."

"The books I bought for him myself, good woman, and the school is an excellent one, whercin boys receive a good religious education."

"Well, ma'am, but it's not our religion they teach; an' though the school may be a very good one for Protestants, no Catholic boy

can stay in it, except his people wants to have him reared up a Protestant."

"Mr. Watkins," cried his wife, "I pray you come here—only fancy, this poor woman whose son I told you I had sent to school—why, here he has been but a week in attendance, and she comes to tell me that she cannot send him there any more—because, forsooth! it is a Protestant school. Did you ever hear of such a silly woman?"

Now, it happened that worthy Mr. Watkins prided himself no little on his thorough appreciation of the benefits which the Reformation had conferred on the world, and a corresponding detestation of Popish fraud and superstition, and what not; and he had cheerfully consented that his wife should take charge of this Irish boy, with a view to his conversion from the errors of Popery. On this point, then, he was peculiarly sensitive, and an angry glow was on his sallow cheek as he approached the offending party.

"Are you not aware, woman," he said, in a magisterial tone, "that your boy will have a much better chance for succeeding in the world, by early embracing the enlightened views and doctrines of Protestantism? I can assure you, my worthy Mrs. — Burke, eh? (the widow courtesied in silence) that Popery is not the thing for this age or country, and if you wish your son to prosper in the world,

you will rather urge him to pass into the brighter rays of Gospel truth."

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Burke, modestly, yet firmly, "it may be all true what you say, but all his forebearers, since the days of St. Patrick, have lived an' died Catholics, an' so will he, with God's help. I'm a poor ignorant woman, sir, as regards the learnin' of this world—but in the matter of religion I know my duty to myself an' my children, an' with God's help I'll do it; for, let us be poor or rich in this world, it'll be all the same at the hour of death; an' we'll never be so foolish as to give up our religion for the sake of the poor perishable things of this wicked world."

"Yes; but, poor misguided creature," went on Mr. Watkins, "how do you know that your religion is right, after all? Confessedly unlearned as you are, and, I suppose, totally unacquainted with the Holy Scriptures, how can you tell whether you are in the way of salvation or not?"

"Why, sir, I believe what the Church proposes to me, an' I'm sure there's no other safe guide on earth. Christ himself is with her all days, an' will be to the end—an' so she can't be wrong."

"Well, well," said Mr. Watkins, peevishly, "I see the priests teach their dupes some little Scripture, just what it suits them to bring forward; but this is mere loss of time. Settle with this *pious* woman, Mrs. Watkins, (and he

laid a sneering emphasis on the adjective,) for since she cannot conscientiously allow her son to take lessons from a Protestant teacher, or to study Protestant books, it were cruel to insist on her continuing to receive Protestant money. Get rid of her at once."

"Certainly, my dear, since you wish it," was Mrs. Watkins's dutiful reply; and so poor Mrs. Burke was paid off, and informed that her services were no longer required.

"An' about the clothes, ma'am, that you kindly gave Willy: I suppose he's not to have them now?" This was said as Mrs. Burke was about to leave the room.

"You can keep them for a few days, as you may probably think better of this matter; if so, I shall be glad to employ you again, and will do all I promised for your son."

"Many thanks, ma'am, for all your goodness, but with God's help my mind can never change about that school, so I'll bring home the things in the mornin', as you might be wantin' them for some other boy that you'd wish to send to school in the same way." There was a slight, an almost imperceptible tincture of irony in the last words, of which the speaker herself was scarcely aware, but it gave no small offence to her two hearers, who, when she was gone, launched out into a bitter invective against Irish Papists, which lasted till their horses were announced.

"Well, mother," said Willy, as his mother

entered their poor but neat dwelling, "what did the lady say?"

"Indeed, Willy, dear, she said and done what I didn't expect from her. Poor, simple woman that I was, sure I thought she would not be angry with us for bein' true to our own religion, but, God help me, I knew little about it; not only herself, but Mr. Watkins himself, tried to hoodwink me into lettin' you go to the school; an' then when they found it wouldn't do, they paid me off, an' said I wasn't to have any more work there; and that's not all, Willy" — she added, taking off her bonnet and sitting down by the fire — "for I'm to take back the clothes, unless you go to their school again."

"Well, then, mother, they can have them this very minute," said the high-spirited boy; "for, now that we know what they're about, an' that it's tryin' to make me a turncoat they are, I wouldn't wear their clothes. So don't fret about that, mother, dear! for I'd sooner go in rags than keep them, when that's the way. But what troubles me is, that you have lost a good friend through my means; for Mrs. Watkins always paid you well." And the tears which his own disappointment could not draw forth now burst from his eyes, as he thought of his mother's loss, — a loss so very serious in its probable consequences.

"Never mind, Willy, never mind!" was the widow's pious answer, "God is more pow-

erful than all the world, an' if it be his holy will, he can an' will make up this loss ; an' if he doesn't, why, blessed be his holy name ! we'll not murmur, for we couldn't do otherwise than we did, unless we wanted to sell ourselves for the poor paltry comforts of this world."

In the evening, when Peter came home, as he always did on Saturday night, he gave his little savings, as usual, to his mother, and taking his place by the clean, cheerful-looking hearth, he looked around for Willy. "Why, what in the world's the matter with you, Willy?" he said, seeing that his brother looked unusually dejected ; "why, man, your face is as long as my arm !"

"Indeed, Peter," said his mother, "there's enough to make him look sorrowful ; though if he'd take my advice, he'd put his little griefs in the hands o' the merciful God, an' then they'd trouble him no more." She then proceeded to relate how they had found out the true purpose for which Willy had been sent to school — her visit of the morning to Mrs. Watkins, and its result — winding up with an earnest effusion of gratitude for having discovered the snare ere yet it was too late.

Great was her surprise, and greater still her sorrow, when Peter exclaimed, bursting into a loud laugh, "God give ye both more sense, — that's all I say !"

"Why, Peter !" cried his mother, with a

wild look of astonishment, "what do you mean, at all?"

"I just mean this, mother!" returned the boy, in a bold, confident tone; "that I only wish such a chance had been thrown in my way, an' you'd see how soon I'd jump at it."

"God forbid, Peter, dear!" said the poor woman, with affecting solemnity, while the tears coursed down her withered cheek, "God forbid, *acushla machree!* for that 'id be jumpin' into the middle o' danger—it 'id be nothin' else but temptin' the Lord!"

"Danger!" repeated Peter, contemptuously, "danger, indeed! don't you think, mother, that I could stick to my own religion, if all the Protestants in New York were hammerin' their lies into my head?—ay! to be sure, could I; an' as I said, if I had Willy's chance, I wouldn't be the fool to throw it over my shoulder, as he did."

His brother was about to reply, his cheek glowing with honest indignation, when one of the little girls called out, "Husht; all o' ye! there's some stranger comin' up the stairs."

Here the woman of the house (from whom Mrs. Burke rented her two rooms) was heard calling out from the bottom of the stairs— "Open the door, Mrs. Burke! here's a lady to see you."

Hastening to the door, with the candle in her hand, Biddy was just in time to receive Mrs. Watkins. "You see I have found you out!"

said the lady, unceremoniously entering the room, and smiling at the widow's look of astonishment. "The truth is, I cannot give Willy up so easily, and I have come here on purpose (though scarcely an hour returned from the country) to try and prevail on you to send him to me on Monday morning. What say you, Willy?" she added, going over and stroking down his fair hair.

"Whatever my mother thinks right for me to do, ma'am!" said Willy, standing up, and making a respectful bow; "she knows best."

"Well, Mrs. Burke, how is it to be? Remember all I promised to do for your son, and do not lightly cast away his good fortune. I have no children of my own, and there is no saying what he may come to, should we find him trustworthy and obedient."

"I allow, ma'am, that your offer is a good one," said the widow, in a firm tone; "but let the temptation be ever so great, I'm not at liberty to accept it, except you could promise to bring him up in the holy Catholic Church, an' that's what you couldn't do, I know well. When everything about him 'id be Protestant, an' him always listenin' to such talk about our religion as I heard myself this mornin'! Oh, no, ma'am, dear, don't ask me! I'm willin' to slave an' toil for my child; an' I can bear to see him poor an' naked, too, if that's the will o' God; but it 'id break my heart to see him in danger of forgettin' his religion. But sure

I'm thankful to you, ma'am, God knows I am! for all your good intentions with regard to Willy, an' I'm heart sorry you took the trouble o' comin' here to-night to this poor place, an' all alone, too."

"Oh, that is of no consequence," said Mrs. Watkins, evasively, for she chose to suppress the fact that her husband was waiting in the carriage at the door. Neither did it serve her purpose to acknowledge that both had been induced to take this step by the report received a day or two before from the school-master, that Willy Burke was no common boy, and deserved a far better fate than being suffered to remain in the darkness of Popery.

"But what a fine family you have, Mrs. Burke," said the lady, looking round; and her eye rested on Peter. "Is this youth another son of yours?"

"That's my eldest son, ma'am," replied the mother, and her voice trembled as she spoke. "He's been earnin' somethin' for us this time back."

Whether it was that the lady saw something in the boy's look that gave her better hopes of him, or whether she merely spoke at random, she addressed him in a gracious manner—"What do you think, my boy, of this decision of your mother?"

"Just this, ma'am: that if the offer were made to me, instead of Willy, I wouldn't be the fool to refuse it."

“In that case you shall have the same offer, for I see you know how to appreciate an advantage. Will you embrace the proposal that your brother has rejected?”

“That will I, ma’am, with a heart and a half, let who will say no.”

“Oh, Peter, Peter!” cried his mother, with a passionate burst of tears, “don’t say that, *achorra!* or you’ll break your mother’s heart, because you are just goin’ headlong into temptation.”

“I don’t care mother, — I’m old enough an’ wise enough to take care o’ myself, an’ you’ll see I can keep to my religion as well as yourself or Willy either; for all that, I’ll be catchin’ the larnin’ when I can get it.”

“Well, then, on Monday I’ll expect you,” said Mrs. Watkins; “and I hope, Peter, you will not listen to anything your mother can say against your coming; for, though she is a good, well-meaning woman, she has no knowledge of the world.”

“Never fear, ma’am,” was Peter’s reply; “if I’m livin’, you’ll see me early a Monday mornin’.”

So with a cold “Good-night, Mrs. Burke, I hope you’ll soon come to a better understanding,” good Mrs. Watkins retired, little caring for the heavy load of misery she had cast on the already afflicted widow, and heedless of the fearful seeds of dissension so recklessly sown in that hitherto united and affectionate family.

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CHAPTER III.

HONESTY THE BEST POLICY.

ON Monday morning, according to promise, Peter Burke repaired to the house of Mrs. Watkins, and as his clothes were in tolerably good condition, he was sent off at once to school, loaded with his brother's rejected books. The boy's heart was naturally good, though even then less or more tainted by the companionship of the ungodly with whom he had been brought into contact. He was deeply touched by the sight of his mother's tears, when she saw him leave home on what she deemed a perilous errand; and the rising demon of ambition within his soul had to fight a hard battle for his prey.

"God's blessin' be about you, Peter!" said his mother, in a choking voice; "an' I'm in dread, poor fellow, that you're puttin' yourself in the way of losin' it altogether, for it's a bad beginnin' for man or woman to slight the advice of their parents. An' another thing, it's a bad sign to see any one so proud out o' their own strength. But I see there's no use talkin'

to you, poor foolish boy, so I can only pray that God may save you from the danger that you're plungin' yourself into!"

"Do, then, mother dear, pray to God for me; though I'm sure there's no such danger as you think, for I hope I'm too steadfast in my religion to let anything draw me away from it. But it grieves me sorely, mother, that I'll not be earnin' anything for you now, an' you wantin' it so badly — indeed it does, mother; an' only I'm in hopes that I'll soon be able to do better for you, I wouldn't go at all; that's as true as I'm standin' here."

"Oh! as to that, Peter," replied his mother, still weeping bitterly, "it doesn't cost me a thought — for sure God is a rich provider, an' he'll send me an' mine enough to live on. An' who knows but you'll be turned against them people and their temptations, the same as Willy was — so I'll not fret so much about it till I see." This new ray of hope dried up the widow's tears, and gave her a degree of strength and courage in the presence of this new affliction.

"Mother, do you know what I'm thinkin'?" said Willy, a little while after his brother's departure.

"No, then, *alanna*; what is it?"

"Why, don't you think it 'id be a good thing if I was to go and speak to Mr. Miller? Who knows, but as Peter's gone, he'd give me his place? an' then you'd be as well off as ever."

"Sure enough, child, it's a good thought," said his mother, "but somehow or another I'm afraid to trust you in it; for only Peter got into bad company in the same place, he'd never be so headstrong in his own opinion, or go against his mother's biddin'."

Willy's countenance fell; the light of hope which for a moment illumined it was quickly gone, but still he thought not of opposing his mother's declared opinion. "Well, mother, you know best; but if it was pleasin' to you, I'd be glad to be doin' somethin'."

"I know that, Willy dear, — I know it very well; but let us pray to God that somethin' may turn up that you can go to without any danger. Pray, my son, — an' we'll all pray — an' let us not forget poor Peter in our prayers."

And Willy did wait patiently and submissively; and that evening, when his mother's work was done, the little family knelt together in the presence of God, and invoked his blessing and protection for themselves and all dear to them. They waited up long after their usual hour of retiring to rest, in hopes of Peter's return, but Peter did not appear; and at last the poor anxious mother threw herself on her humble bed, to weep and pray rather than to sleep.

In the afternoon of the next day, Willy strolled out into the street, and, becoming insensibly diverted from his melancholy by the

incessant stream of life pouring on around him, he wandered on, admiring the endless variety of objects which everywhere met his view, without being at all conscious that the day was already on the decline. His attention was first called to the lateness of the hour by the rapidly increasing gloom ; and, fearful that his mother might have been wanting him during his long absence, he was hurrying home, not without having to make frequent inquiries as to the direction he should take, for he had gone far out of his own latitude, when, passing through a narrow and dimly-lighted street, his foot struck against something hard, and stooping to see what it was, he picked up a cartridge, or small roll of gold pieces. For a moment his heart was filled with joy and exultation as he fancied all this wealth his own, and he handing it to his mother — his poor, toiling mother. Eagerly and closely he grasped his treasure ; and drawing his little cloth cap tightly down over his brow, for the evening was raw and cold, he hurried on with the elastic step of hope and joy. Alas ! ere yet he had reached his home — even while within a few feet of the door — the buoyant step was suddenly arrested, and the tide of joy rolled back from his heart as he remembered, “ This money is not mine — some one has dropped it, an’ is, maybe, lookin’ for it with a sorrowful heart. Well, at any rate I’ll give it to my mother, an’ she’ll do whatever’s best to be done.”

"Thank God!" cried Mrs. Burke as her son reached the top of the stairs, and, throwing open the door, entered the little room where she was preparing their homely supper. "Sure, I was frightened about you, Willy, not knowing what had become of you."

"Look here, mother!" said the boy, and he held out on his open palm the glittering contents of the little package. "Look what I found!"

"Arrah, then, Willy dear, where in the world did you find such a power o' money? one 'id think you had been with the fairies, Lord save us!"

"Not a fairy or fairies, mother; for I just found it lyin' rolled up tight, in some dark, narrow street, as I came along home, an' I was so uplifted that I scarcely felt the ground under me as I came along. But then, just outside there, I began to think that it was no great chance, after all, for that we couldn't keep it." And the poor fellow sat down by the fire with a heavy sigh.

"That's my own *bouchal ban*, now," said his mother, as she wiped away the tears of joy which filled her eyes. "I'd rather hear you say them words, Willy, than if the whole money was our own, honestly earned — God sees I would!"

"An' what will we do with the money, mother?" Willy asked. "Sure we don't know where to find the owner of it."

"But I'll take it to the priest in the mornin', please God," replied his mother, "an' he'll advise us what to do, or maybe he might know who lost it — at any rate, he'll give it out in the church."

Now it happened that at the very time when the widow Burke spoke so decidedly of giving up the money to the priest, she had scarcely wherewith to buy provisions for the next day. Nevertheless, no thought of taking even one piece of the gold ever came into her mind ; or, if such an idea ever presented itself, it was banished with horror and contempt, as a foul suggestion of the Evil One.

On the following morning, Mrs. Burke went to church at her usual hour, and when Mass was over she followed the priest into the vestry-room. Withdrawing modestly into a corner, she waited till he had taken off his vestments and was preparing to leave the room, when, stepping forward, she dropped a low courtesy, and asked would his reverence be kind enough to wait one minute, while she spoke a few words. The priest was an old man, of a mild, benignant countenance, and tall, spare form. His hair was, if not perfectly white, at least of a silvery hue, and the deep furrows which indented his high forehead told that his years had been many, and perhaps his sorrows, too. His eyes, though deeply sunk beneath his brows, had nothing stern in their look, yet their glance was at times so keen as to make

one feel that they could pierce the heart, and read what was passing there.

"Certainly, my good woman, certainly," he said, in reply to Mrs. Burke's request; "what have you got to tell me?"

"It's about some money, sir, that a little boy of mine found yesterday evenin'; an' as we don't know what to do to find the owner, I thought it was best to bring it to your reverence." And so saying, she held out the little roll to the priest.

The latter merely glanced at the money, and then, slowly raising his eyes to the face of her who presented it, he saw that sorrow and care, aye, and poverty, had worn away a fair and comely countenance. He looked, from the old straw bonnet which covered her head, to the thin, threadbare shawl so closely gathered around her meagre form, and then to the old shoes on her feet, and he saw that all was scrupulously clean, but nevertheless expressive of extreme poverty. He stretched out his hand and took the cartridge: "Is it silver, or what?" he asked.

"It's gold, your reverence! for the boy opened it to see what it was."

"And you seem, my poor woman," said the priest in a faltering voice, "as though a little money, silver or gold, would be very acceptable."

A slight flush mounted to poor Biddy's cheek, as she replied, with downcast eyes,

"Why, sir, there's many better off than I am, an' some worse ; but sure whatever way I'm in, me an' mine, it's the will o' God, an' welcome be it, for ever and ever."

More and more interested, the priest went on to inquire into her actual circumstances, and gradually drew from her a confession that three children were altogether depending on her daily labor, while her health was rapidly on the decline, though, as she said, she strove to conceal it from *them*.

"Well, my poor child," said the good priest, and the tear of pity trickled unheeded down his cheek, "I will not say that you have done anything but your duty in giving up this money ; for no Christian, at least worthy of the name, could have appropriated all, or any of it, to his or her own use, without sinning grievously against the law of God ; yet I will own that, situated as you are, it must have been a sore temptation to you."

"Why then, it wasn't, your reverence," said the widow, with the touching simplicity of truth ; "for though I'd be thankful to the good God if he'd be pleased to give me or my children a means of earnin' that we could depend on, yet, somehow or another, I wasn't much tempted to keep this money, thanks be to God for that ! for I'm a poor frail woman, an' I mightn't have been able to overcome the temptation."

"Why, this unlearned, simple woman," said

the priest to himself, "is a pattern of true and unassuming piety!" Aloud he said: "And what is your name, my good woman?"

"My married name is Burke, please your reverence, — Biddy Burke."

The name seemed to strike familiarly on the ear of the listener. "Burke, Burke," he repeated two or three times, as though endeavoring to connect some detached remembrances, "and from what part of Ireland do you come?"

"From the county Tipperary, sir, an' the parish of Kilbeggan, if your reverence ever heard of such a place."

The priest, instead of replying, took out his memorandum-book, and after turning over its leaves for a few seconds, he paused, and glanced his eye over a certain page. "And your husband's name — his Christian name — was Andrew, or Andy, was it not?"

"Why then it was, sir!" said Biddy, now thoroughly awakened to curiosity. "Andy Burke was his name, sir; an', thanks be to the great God! I'm neither afraid nor ashamed to own it, — may his soul rest in peace! for it's himself was the good husband all out. But, sir, how did you know his name, if I'm not makin' too free in askin'?"

Unheeding her last words, the priest raised his swimming eyes to heaven. "Merciful God!" he exclaimed, with fervor, "how mysterious are thy ways, — by what devious paths dost thou sometimes conduct us, thy children, to

the fulfilment of our destiny! My good Mrs. Burke," he then said, "what I am now going to tell you may well justify your pious confidence in God. Know, then, that for months past I have been anxiously inquiring after you and your family, an old and dear friend in Ireland having written to me that he had casually heard of your good husband's death, and feared that you might, therefore, be in necessitous circumstances. Now take note of the wondrous mercy of our God, — here has he thrown this money in your son's way, and inspired you with the just and holy purpose of giving it up to me, in order that I might endeavor to find its owner; and all this, that I might discover the object of my search, and you obtain a friend. Truly hath it been said, that *virtue bringeth its own reward*," he added, as though to himself.

"An' sure I always knew it," said Biddy, almost exultingly; "the Lord never fails to raise up friends for them that puts their trust in Him, an' does what they can to obey him. But will your reverence be good enough to tell me who it was that wrote to you about us?"

"It was *my* old college-friend, and your former pastor, the Rev. Mr. Maloney!"

"Ah! the Lord's blessin' be about him now, an' for ever more!" cried the widow, clâsping her hands fervently together. "I might a' known it was himself, an' it raises my heart to hear that he doesn't forget us,

though we're so far away. But sure he said he'd remember us, an' it seems he does. But I'm keepin' your reverence standin' too long, an' so I'll not trespass any longer now."

"Well, mother, what news?" was Willy's earnest inquiry, as his mother entered the room on her return.

"Just the old story over again, my son: that '*Honesty's the best policy!*' Sure I always said that God 'id do for us, an'; glory be to his holy name, he has raised up a friend for us already."

"Why, what in the world has happened to you, mother? for it's long since I seen you lookin' so joyful."

"An' well I may, Willy dear! for sure when I went to give that money (an' it was the lucky money all out) to the priest, hē began to question me, an' when he found out who I was, he was mighty glad entirely, for it seems that poor Father Maloney, God's blessin' be about him! is an old friend of his, an' wrote to him about us, as soon as he heard of your poor father's death; so his reverence was ever since wishin' to find us out, but couldn't hear anything of us till the Lord put it in my head to go with the money."

On hearing Father Maloney's name mentioned, the two little girls cried out with great joy, "Och, then, mother, dear, did his reverence write about us?" while Willy pulled out his

little cotton handkerchief, and wiped the tears from his eyes: tears of joy they were, and such as the poor boy had never shed before.

"An' you tell me he didn't forget us mother, an' that he wrote to put in the good word for us;—well, that's the best news I heard this many a day, an' I'd rather hear it than if somebody gave us a thousand pounds! but sure he said he'd keep us all in mind. An' mother, is that all?"

"No, dear, it is not all," replied his mother, "for the priest said he'd come an' see us, an' sure that same will be a great comfort to us, even if he can do nothing to help us; for it does a body good, let their trouble be what it may, to see the priest crossin' their door; one is never so lonesome when they see them, for they know then that they're not without a friend. But I'll tell you, Willy, dear, what I want you to do; I'm gettin' very uneasy about Peter, an' if you'd just run down to Mrs. Watkins's in the evenin', when you think he's home from school—an that's the school that I have neither love nor likin' for—an' tell him I wish that he'd come over to-night, if he can at all. I want to speak to him about goin' to his duty."

When evening was come, Willy went on his errand, being himself anxious to see his brother. On arriving at Mrs. Watkins's house, he found his brother proudly exhibiting his copy-book to the lady, having been called into

the parlor for that purpose. Mr. Watkins was seated in a high-backed chair near the fire, and had raised his head from a book which he had been reading, in order to bestow his meed of praise on Peter's progress. Just at this moment, Willy was shown in, by Mrs. Watkins's orders, but he advanced no farther than just within the door, and stood with his cap in his hand, modestly waiting for some one to speak.

"Peter, there is your brother," said the lady; and when the lad turned quickly round, poor Willy could scarcely believe that it was his brother, so much handsomer did he look in his new and fine clothes. The brothers merely exchanged glances, for Mrs. Watkins just then spoke.

"I have had you come in here, Willy, that you might see how well your brother gets on with his writing. We have been just admiring the great improvement already visible. Indeed, if he goes on as he has begun, he will be able in a very few months to go into the counting-house. And then see how well he is looking; you would scarcely know him, I believe."

"Indeed, ma'am," said Willy, "he's not the same boy at all; I'm sure you have done your own share for him, anyhow."

"Yes, and I would willingly have done as much for you, had you not chosen to act the fool."

"I only obeyed my mother, ma'am," re-

turned Willy firmly, though respectfully, "an' I'm sure that's what I was bound to do."

"I do not know as to that," said Mrs. Watkins, in a dogmatical tone; "there are limits even to our filial submission; and seeing that your mother's opposition was purely the effect of her bigotry and extreme ignorance, I think, and so must all rational people, that you did wrong in obeying her."

To this Willy listened without attempting any reply, for he had sense enough to know that it did not become one of his age and station to bandy words with the lady; but when he saw that she had to come to a pause, he ventured to say to his brother, "Peter, my mother wonders very much that you're not comin' home at all these days; an' she sent me to tell you that she'd be glad if you could get leave to come over, either to-night or to-morrow night, if it's only for an hour or two."

"Well, if Mrs. Watkins will be good enough to let me, I'll go back with you now, Willy; an' indeed, only I was so busy ever since I came here, I wouldn't have been without goin' to see my mother."

To Willy it was very plain that this proposal was by no means pleasing to Mrs. Watkins, between whom and her husband he saw a significant look exchanged, notwithstanding that the gentleman had apparently resumed his study of the book before him. "Well, really, Peter," said the lady, in her

bland, soft accents, "I know not how you can go this evening, or even to-morrow evening; you have such long lessons to prepare, that they occupy, or should occupy, your whole evening. Has your mother any particular object in sending for him, Willy? for, if not, I fear she must excuse him for some days longer. He is surely not a child, that she should fear to have him out of her sight for a week or two."

"Why, then," said Willy, puzzled to know what he had best say, "why, then, ma'am, I think she *does* want him particularly. I heard her sayin' that she did."

"And might I ask," said Mrs. Watkins, in her very sweetest tones, "and might I ask what this particular purpose is, that it makes her so very urgent to see him?"

Willy hesitated, reddened, and looked at his brother with an air as though he expected some help from him in his dilemma. But Peter only said, "Why don't you speak, you foolish boy, an' not stand there like a fool! Sure it's no treason, I hope."

"Well, then, my mother was sayin', Peter, that she wants to have you go to your duty, an' that's all; she's afraid you might neglect it."

Mrs. Watkins affected ignorance. "To go to his duty! and what is that, pray? What duty does the woman mean?"

"Why to go to his confession, ma'am!"

said Willy, with a look of undisguised amazement; "I'm goin', please God, some day this week, an' my mother thinks he ought to go at the same time."

Here Mrs. Watkins burst into a loud laugh — louder than she usually indulged in — while even her grave husband, letting fall his book, was heard to utter a deep, low sound, that might be taken as a similar demonstration.

"Oh, if that be the object," said the lady, when she had in some degree recovered her composure, "lessons and everything else must, of course, give way. Oh! certainly, Peter, my good boy, you must go to confession; and when you are about it, you will, of course, tell the priest of that grievous sin of having gone for some days to a school from which Papist books are excluded. Now, Mr. Watkins," she added, turning to that gentleman, "is not this the darkest invention of the Evil One — only see how these poor ignorant people are kept in thrall!"

Willy had listened to this exordium with no small indignation; and when it was concluded, he advanced a step towards his brother, while his cheek glowed and his eye flashed.

"Are yon comin', Peter," he said, "or are you not? — what am I to tell my mother?"

Alas! the poison was already eating into the soul of the elder brother, and though *his* cheek, too, wore a crimson flush, it was one of shame — not resentment. He was angry with

his brother, too, for having spoken as he did. "Just tell her that I'm old enough to mind my own affairs — an' see that you don't come here or any more such errands, or you'll not be thankful to yourself. I'll go to see my mother when it answers me, — so walk, now!"

"You just serve him right, Peter," said Mrs. Watkins, extending her hand to the boy, as she spoke, with a smile of approbation; "I would have you treat your mother respectfully, of course, but do not suffer her to carry your reason captive. Learn to think for yourself where your immortal welfare — and temporal, too — is at stake."

"So you'll not come — an' that's the message I'm to give my poor mother?" said Willy, still addressing his brother. "Then may God look down on you, Peter Burke, this blessed night! I wouldn't be in your coat, fine as it is, for all the money Mr. Watkins has. God be with you, brother! — we can only pray for you, an' that we'll do." The tears rushed to his eyes, and he hastily left the room and the house, his heart swelling with mingled sorrow and indignation.

It was a cold, rainy evening, and the lamps themselves shed but a dull, dim light on the cheerless streets; but Willy Burke heeded not the falling rain, nor the cold, nor noticed the bleak aspect of the city, as he passed along with a hurried step on his homeward way. Never had his young heart been so heavily

crushed. Never had he felt so wretched. Keenly susceptible as his feelings were, this first instance of unkindness from his only brother wrung his very heart. And then his mother — that best and most beloved of parents — to hear her spoken of in the most contemptuous manner, and to reflect that his brother, her eldest born, had tacitly encouraged the reviler, the mocker of that revered parent, and of the faith which should be defended and professed at the expense of all worldly hopes and interests. Outraged in his brotherly love, in his filial respect and affection, and in his religious principles, the noble-hearted boy felt within him a mixture of grief and indignation which he himself could not have described, though it seemed throbbing in his heart and in his brain. On he went, then, through the fast-falling rain, nor perceived that his thin, thread-bare jacket was saturated through and through, until his mother's anxious tenderness discovered the fact the moment he entered the room.

"Why, Willy, dear, your clothes are all wet — sure I didn't think it was rainin' so heavy. Why didn't you go into some house, poor, fellow, till the shower 'id be over, an' you knowin' that your clothes were so thin an' light?"

"To tell you the truth, mother," said Willy, "I didn't think about the rain at all."

His mother had been till now busily engaged making up a good fire, and it was only the

tone in which her son spoke that drew her eyes to his face. "Why, then, God bless us, Willy darlin', what's the matter with you, at all? You look as if somethin' had happened you. Did you see Peter? But then, before you tell me anything you must peel off every tack, till I dry them here at the fire. An' as you have no other clothes to put on, I think it's better for you to go to bed till they're dry. But no," she said, suddenly changing her mind, "I'll put that big-coat o' your poor father's about you, an' you can sit down here in the corner. Go into the room there, dear, an' take off your things—the coat's hanging up, you know, at the foot of the bed—an' come out when you have it on. I'll have a bit o' supper warm for you when you come back." The boy obeyed in silence, but his mother heard him sigh heavily when he was alone. "God help you, poor child!" was the prayer of her loving, sorrowful heart, as she went on with the preparation of their humble meal.

"An' now, what about Peter, *acushla*?" said Mrs. Burke, when her son, rolled up in his dead father's over-coat, took his place at the little table, a chair having been placed for him by his sisters, in the warmest corner.

"Indeed, mother dear! I don't like to tell you what I seen an' heard since I left you; but there's no use tryin' to hide it; for the sooner you know it, it's all the better." The poor mother sat down on the opposite side of the

face, pale and trembling, for these words seemed to herald a justification of her secret fears. But when she heard all — the jibing sneers wherewith one of the holiest sacraments of the church had been spoken of — her son's undutiful and ungrateful message, and, worse than all, his silence when his religion was so basely reviled — when she heard all this, (even though her son told her nothing of the contemptuous epithets bestowed on herself,) it seemed as though a fearful weight fell suddenly and crushingly on her heart; and, sinking back in her chair, she covered her face with her hands. But no tear came to her relief, for her eyes were dry and burning, and for some seconds she spoke not a word.

Willy and the little girls were alarmed by her silence, and all three gathered fondly around her, beseeching her to speak to them. "Sure, mother darlin'!" said Willy, twining his arms around her neck, "sure it's not so bad but it might be worse. God loves you too well to let Peter come to harm; an' I'm sure if you go to see him yourself, you'll find him as good an' dutiful as ever, for I know he loves you in his heart, poor fellow! an' it's only the bad advice that made him act that way."

"An' you're right enough, my own darlin' son," cried his mother, starting to her feet; "thanks be to God, I can still take him home, for I'm sure he'll not disobey me when I bid him come with me. Please the Lord, I'll go in

the mornin' early an' bring him home, an' if I only get him safe out of it, a child o' mine will never set foot in the same house; I'd sooner see ye, ay, a thousand times! go into a plague-house! There now, Willy, dear! sit down to your supper — no, children! don't ask me, for my heart's so full I couldn't eat a bit. When ye're done your supper, we'll get our prayers said, an' go early to bed, for I'm not to say very well."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BROKEN HEART.

THE long, wakeful night was at length passed, and Mrs. Burke, having said her morning prayers, put her little place in order, and gave her children their breakfast, then set out for Mrs. Watkins's, somewhat strengthened and comforted by the hope that now, at least, she would have her son home with her, — consoling herself with the reflection that she was about to snatch him from the fiery furnace of temptation which had already scathed his soul. Full of these hopeful thoughts, she knocked at the door, and on being admitted, requested to see her son. "He's gone to the country, Mrs. Burke," said the girl who opened the door.

"Gone to the country! Ah, then, when did he go, Ellen?"

"This morning — but here's the mistress coming to speak to you." The servant disappeared just as Mrs. Watkins advanced in her elegant morning-dress.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Burke," said the lady,

with lofty condescension, "I hope I see you in good health."

"Well, no, ma'am — many thanks for your kind inquiry — but I'm not half well these times. Indeed, only the business it is, I couldn't stir out at all this mornin', so early, for, God help me! I'm gettin' so feeble that I can scarce do a hand's turn. But is it true, ma'am, that Peter's not here this mornin'?"

"Why, yes, Mrs. Burke; Mr. Watkins sent him off about an hour ago, on an errand of trust to our steward in the country."

"An' will he be long away, Mrs. Watkins?" was the trembling question of the poor mother, who saw in this timely absence but another subterfuge to keep possession of the boy. "Will he be back to-day, ma'am?"

"Really, I cannot say, it may be that the steward may find work for him for a few days — but I do not pretend to know."

The poor disappointed mother raised her dim eyes to heaven, and murmured in an undertone, "May God have mercy on me, and on this poor, thoughtless boy!"

"Why truly," — said Mrs. Watkins, assuming an air of offended dignity, — "why truly, you are the strangest woman — one would think you had heard some mournful tidings, you have put on such a long face. What harm, I pray you, can your son receive from going for a few days to the country? Surely Mr. Wat-

kins is at liberty to employ him as his affairs require."

"Och, it is'nt that, ma'am; it is'nt that!" and the widow, as she spoke, was forced to lean against the wall near her. "God knows I'd be the first to advise him to obey his master's orders, an' to be always ready an' willin' to do his duty to you an' him, — but somehow I'm afraid ma'am, (I may as well tell you the truth,) that he's not goin' on as I'd wish, with regard to his duty to God — an' that's the main point, after all."

Mrs. Watkins smiled. "Oh, I understand! I remember now that your youngest son brought a message to his brother about going to confession, or something of that sort. But I should suppose that the matter is not so very important but it can be deferred till his return. He may have a few more sins to confess, to be sure; but then, you know, it will be all the same to the priest — so pray don't trouble yourself on that head. You can go home, now, and when Peter comes he shall make a confession that will banish all your fears." And so saying, she coolly opened the door — a significant hint that she desired no farther conversation.

Mrs. Burke drew her old shawl closely around her, being suddenly seized with a cold shivering; her pale, thin face assumed a still more pallid hue, and her tongue refused to articulate a word. She might have passed out

without being able to make any sort of reply, had not Mrs. Watkins said, with a cold smile :

“ I see you are at a loss for words to express your anger ; but pray do not curse me, heretic as I am. Your priest might readily excuse the sin, and even consider it as none ; but God, my good woman, will not view the matter as your father confessor does, nor forgive you so readily.”

The poor woman felt at the moment a choking sensation in her throat, which for a second or two she could not overcome, and she stood gasping as though for breath, with her eyes fixed on the lady. The latter, somewhat alarmed, extended her hand as though to support her ; but at the moment it seemed as though strength from above were given to the sufferer ; and, moving a pace nearer the door, she made an effort to say : “ No, thank you, ma'am, I'm better now — it was only a little weakness I took. I'm goin' now, ma'am, an' God knows whether we'll ever meet again ; but I want to tell you before I go, that you know little of our holy religion, or you wouldn't speak of it as you do. No, Mrs. Watkins, I wasn't thinkin' of cursin' you, or any one else — God knows I wasn't ! — but I was goin' to pray to the merciful God that you might never have as sore a heart as I have this day.” So saying, she moved away, and slowly descended the steps in front of the door ; being, indeed, scarcely able to support herself. Mrs. Wat.

kins stood and looked after her a moment, as she moved heavily along, her thin, attenuated figure but scantily covered from the cold, sharp air; she thought of the provocation she had so wantonly given, and of the Christian meekness of her parting words, and she said within herself: "How unlike all that I have heard and read of these Romanists! After all, this poor woman seems to have some little glimmering of Gospel light." For a moment her better nature predominated, and she was about to call the poor washerwoman back, in order to apologize for her unkindness; but, alas! the evil spirit of pride resumed the mastery, the door was closed after the poor, shivering woman, and the opportunity passed away — never to return.

Mrs. Burke, on reaching her own dwelling, was unable to ascend the stairs without assistance from the good woman of the house. The disease which had been so long manfully resisted, would now no longer be baffled or put off, and the heart-rending emotions of the last twenty-four hours brought on a violent fever. That evening the poor mother lay on her bed, in the first wild paroxysms of a high fever, while her three children stood around, stupefied with grief and terror, of they knew not what. It was fortunate that Willy, in the first hours of his mother's illness, had run to tell the priest, (not that he feared his mother's death, but that he knew no other friend on whom to

call,) and towards evening the venerable clergyman entered the room, to the great relief of the children.

Although Father Fitzherbert saw at a glance that the delirious state of the patient rendered spiritual consolation impossible, yet still he lingered by the bed, not wishing to deprive the children of the comfort they seemed to derive from his presence, and, moreover, directing them to prepare some suitable drink and medicine for their mother, himself having given Willy the money to make the necessary purchases. While he sat by the bed, waiting to see the effect of the medicine he had given, he was painfully struck by the incessant wailing of the unconscious sufferer, as even amidst the wanderings of delirium she called ever for her absent son, and bemoaned his loss. Scarcely another name but his was heard in her ravings; and the good priest at length turned to Willy, where he stood leaning over the foot-rail of the bed.

"Does your brother know of his mother's illness?" The boy started at the question, and made an effort to reply, but the words seemed to stick in his throat, and a scarlet flush mounted to his cheek. Deeming all this emotion but the natural effect of violent and deep grief, the priest turned to one of the little girls and repeated the inquiry.

"No, your reverence, I don't think he does,"

was her reply, "for there was no word sent to him about it."

"Then I would have you go at once, my boy," said Father Fitzherbert, "and let your brother know, for if you wait even another day it may be too late; and from the constant allusion your mother makes to him, I am persuaded that his presence will ease her mind, when once this delirium has passed away. You will go, then, as soon as possible, and I will remain here till you return."

But Willy, with all his habitual veneration for the clergy, seemed in no hurry to obey, and it was easy enough to see that the command was anything but agreeable to him. This the priest saw, and saw it with surprise; for Mrs. Burke, in speaking of her children some days before, had dwelt with excusable pride on the docility and other good qualities of her younger son. But Willy, like all others, had his own faults of mind and temper, and amongst these was a tenacious remembrance of injury, whether real or fancied, which now steeled his heart against his brother.

"Are you not going, Willy?" asked the priest, mildly. Willy had taken down his cap from the pin where it usually hung, and now stood twirling it between his hands. He dared not raise his eyes, for he felt that a piercing glance rested upon him.

"Only for who it is that bids me, I wouldn't go a step after him," he said, doggedly, "for

it's little he deserves it. If it wasn't for him an' his Mrs. Watkins, poor mother wouldn't be lyin' where she is, for they broke her heart between them, an' now I'd just let them alone together!"

"Child!" asked Father Fitzherbert, in his sweet, solemn tones, "child! do you call yourself a Christian — a Catholic?"

"I do, your reverence, to be sure I do!"

"Are you aware, then, that as such, you are bound, imperatively bound, to go on this errand of kindness and charity? If your brother has erred, let him answer to God for his fault; it is not for you to inflict upon him so grievous a punishment as this. How know you but that the solemn scene which here awaits him will effectually open his eyes to the truth? and would you, through a feeling of resentment, as unkind as it is uncharitable, withhold from him the benefit of a dying mother's blessing, and her last advice? and deprive that mother herself, so justly dear to you, of the comfort of seeing him before she leaves this world? For I warn you that moment is even now not far distant. No, my son, you will go on this mission of love and peace, and God will bless you here and hereafter; for himself hath assured us that the merciful 'shall obtain mercy.'"

He was interrupted by the deep, repentant sobs of the boy; and he had barely concluded, when Willy was on his knees before him, his eyes brimful of tears, and his hands clasped in

the attitude of earnest supplication. "Forgive me, your reverence!" he exclaimed, in a half-stifled voice; "I confess myself in the wrong, an' I humbly beg your pardon."

Father Fitzherbert raised him from the floor. "Not my pardon, but that of God; the God who hateth the proud and revengeful. Ask pardon of Him, my poor child! not of an unworthy mortal, like unto thyself."

"Then I ask God's pardon and yours, sir! An' I'll promise, with the help of God, never to keep spite again. God forgive me, I was very black against poor Peter these days past, but now I'll just run as fast as I can, an' let him know about mother's sickness. I'll be back, your reverence, in less than no time!" And ere a word could be spoken in reply, he was hurrying down the stairs, leaving the priest amazed at the rapid and entire revulsion which a few simple words had effected. But he speedily arrived at the conclusion that their marvellous success was owing to the excellent training which had implanted the divine truths of religion in the fervid soul of the boy, and fostered therein the liveliest remembrance of God.

Peter Burke was not yet returned from the country, and Willy delivered his message to Mrs. Watkins, earnestly imploring that his brother might be sent for. "An' if you'll only have the goodness to tell me the way, ma'am,"

said he, "I'll try an' make out the place myself, with God's help!"

Mrs. Watkins, to do her justice, was shocked to hear of Mrs. Burke's alarming illness; and as she thought of her emaciated features and woe-begone looks during their last interview, and remembered the deadly faintness which had come over her, the inward monitor of all mankind spoke out fearfully loud within her soul, charging her with the unwarrantable part she had acted towards the poor unprotected widow. An ashy paleness overspread her face, as she said, in tremulous accents, "No, Willy, you could never make your way there alone; but go home, now, and to-morrow morning, by the first light of day, I shall send for your brother, and have him go to his mother at once. Nay, I may even send to-night; it is not yet too late!"

"Thank you, ma'am," said Willy, with a low bow, and he hastened away, being anxious to relieve the priest from his watch beside the sick-bed of his mother. On entering the room, he found there Mrs. O'Grady, the landlady, who had kindly volunteered to take care of her lodger during her illness. The good woman had a grown-up daughter, who, as she said to Father Fitzherbert, could keep house for her in her absence. "An' so in the name o' God, your reverence, I'll stay an' do all I can for Mrs. Burke; an' sorry I am this day to see her lyin' so low

—indeed we don't see many nowadays like her ! ”

This proposal was gratefully accepted, for Father Fitzherbert had been anxiously casting about in his mind where he was to find a nurse. Immediately after Willy's return, he withdrew, promising to come early on the following day. “Not,” said he to Mrs. O'Grady, “not that I expect our patient will have recovered her senses so soon, for I am quite sure she will be three days, if not more, without undergoing much change ; but I will call every day, to see how matters are going on. The truth is, Mrs. O'Grady,” he added in a lower voice, “the truth is, that when once this delirium has passed away, there will not be a moment to lose in administering the last sacraments ; for I tell you candidly, that the violence of this fit will exhaust the little strength she had, and she may drop off at any moment from excessive weakness. I will send a little good wine, which may be given in small quantities when the fever has once subsided, so as to keep her up as long as possible. I will also send a doctor. Good-night ! ”

All that night the rage of the fever continued unabated ; and the doctor whom Father Fitzherbert had sent, finding, when he came in the morning, that some cooling medicines were required, desired Willy to go with him that he might fetch them back. Being obliged to wait

a little while for the powders, Willy was longer absent than he had expected; and on reaching the top of the stairs at his return, the first sounds that greeted his ear were the deep sobs of his brother, who had arrived a little before, and was now kneeling in an agony of sorrow and remorse beside his mother's bed. The tears were streaming from the poor lad's eyes, and the hot feverish hand of his mother was closely pressed to his heart, while ever and anon he kissed it with passionate fondness. There were none present but the two little girls, who stood silently by, looking alternately at their sick mother, and the brother whose grief they would fain have lessened, but knew not how. It was cruel anguish for poor Peter to listen to the tender yet reproachful words which fell ever from the parched lips of the sufferer, as she seemed to imagine herself talking to him. At times she spoke of his father, and once or twice of Willy, but ever did the course of her incoherent ramblings recur to himself.

"Poor Peter!" she would murmur; "poor child! — och, then, Peter dear! if you'd only think of yourself, think of your soul, *agra gal!* sure what about the poor body? Oh! Peter! Peter! didn't your father tell you to be true to your religion? — who's that says he's going to be a Protestant?" she cried with a wild stare; and, half raising herself in bed, "No, Mrs. Watkins, you needn't think or say any such a thing, — didn't I bring him into the world, an'

am n't I answerable to God for his soul? No, ma'am! it wasn't for the likes o' that he came here, an' I have that much trust in God, that I'm sure he'd never let a child o' mine fall into your snares!" She fell back exhausted, and lay with closed eyes, motionless, while Peter sobbed out anew, and spoke aloud in the fulness of his heart:

"No, mother, dear! with God's help there's no danger, — only live, — only open your eyes, and tell your poor Peter that you know him, and that you'll forgive him, and he'll never give you reason to complain of him again. Oh! mother, darlin', are you dead? — oh! what will I do at all?" and in the extremity of his anguish, he started to his feet and wrung his hands wildly.

"She's not dead, Peter! — she's only in a kind of a slumber, that she falls into after a fit!" and as Willy spoke, he flung his arms around his brother's neck with all the gushing affection of their childish days. "But sure there's no use in grievin' an' frettin' that way, brother! — it 'id be better for us to pray to God, an' maybe he'd take pity on us, an' spare *her* life! Come, children, let us all kneel down!" The little girls passively obeyed, and Peter fell again on his knees, with his face laid on the coverlit of his mother's bed. Few and simple were the words they uttered; and it was only Willy who said aloud, "O Lord! spare us our mother,

our good mother, for what would we do without her if she was taken away from us?"

"Ah, then, God's blessin' be about ye, for good children that ye are!" cried Mrs. O'Grady, who just then entered, and kneeling, she joined in their prayer for a moment. "But now I must see to your mother!" and rising, she approached the bed.

When Peter had talked a little while with his brother and sisters, he asked Mrs. O'Grady whether she thought there was any hope that his mother would soon be sensible again. Before the good woman had time to answer, the patient started from her feverish slumber, and broke out again into her broken and unconnected exclamations.

"There's your answer now, Peter!" said Mrs. O'Grady, as she hastened to administer a portion of the medicine sent by the doctor. "An' I'm afeard it'll be some time before she knows any one — God help her!"

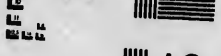
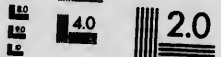
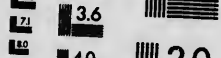
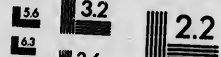
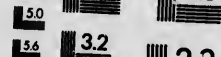
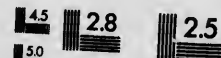
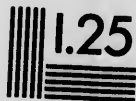
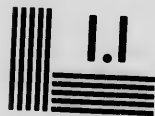
"Then I needn't be waitin' here, Willy," said Peter, turning to his brother, "there's enough of ye to take care of her, an' I could do no good. Mrs. Watkins has promised to give me some money for my mother, an' to send her some nice things that'll be good for her, if I'll hurry back home, for we have a great deal to do in the office."

"An' what are *you* doin' in the office, Peter?" asked Willy, dryly, for he did not at all like



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this new move of his brother; "sure you can't write any yet for them?"

"No," said the other, with some little embarrassment, "but I can tie up papers, an' keep the place in order, while the clerks are all busy writin'. I'll come back in the evenin', an' if mother is no better, I'll stay all night."

"Ah, then, that same 'ill be a great stretch o' kindness," retorted Willy, whose anger was again rising; and though he did not allow it to burst out, yet he could not prevent himself from speaking tartly and testily. "It's a good thing that mother's not dependin' on you, anyway, or I'm afraid she'd come off badly. It's well for her that Father Fitzherbert knows where she lives, an' you may tell Mrs. Watkins that. I'm sure, Peter Burke, if you were as you ought to be, you'd never darken Mrs. Watkins's door, after the way she has treated my poor heart-broken mother."

"I can't wait to answer you now," was Peter's reply; "but you may be sure, Willy, that I just think as much about my mother as you do, for all your talk!" And going over to the bed, he took up his mother's hand and kissed it fondly; then, without another word, not even to his sisters, he hurried from the room.

On his return, Peter found Mrs. Watkins anxiously looking out for him, and her kind inquiries for his mother completely softened

his heart, so that he was disposed to regard her as the best and truest of friends. A dangerous illusion, which the lady well knew how to turn to account. Finding how deeply the sight of his mother, in her present condition, had affected the boy's really warm heart, and dreading the effect of that mother's counsels and entreaties, should he be left to their undivided influence, when her reason returned, Mrs. Watkins kindly proposed that she herself would accompany him in his future visits. "For I am really anxious," said she, "to judge for myself as to the progress of her disease. The things which I told you I would send are all in readiness, so that we can take them with us in the evening. Go, now, to Mr. Watkins, for while he is so hurried with business for a few days, he cannot spare you to go to school."

In the course of the afternoon, Father Fitzherbert again visited Mrs. Burke, whom he found still delirious, and fearfully weak, notwithstanding the rage of the fever. From Willy he received an account of Peter's visit; and to his penetrating mind, "*the trail of the serpent*" was distinctly visible in the whole conduct of the Watkins's as regarded the Burke family. "There is here," said he, within himself, "a deep-laid plan to ensnare this thoughtless boy; may God, in his mercy, defeat their designs, and restrain this poor lamb from straying beyond the fold!" "Your

brother is to come back here in the evening, is he not?" he said aloud to Willy. "Yes, your reverence! he said he'd come an' stay over-night, if mother wasn't better."

"Then I must see and speak with him." Father Fitzherbert, as he spoke, approached the bed, and taking up the hand that lay on the coverlit, he found that the pulse was much less violent than it had been even half an hour before. "Mrs. O'Grady," he said to the nurse, "the fever is already subsiding, so you will require to pay the utmost attention, so as to lose no time in giving some of that strengthening cordial on the first appearance of returning consciousness. Has the doctor been here to-day?"

"Yes, your reverence; he called about noon, and he thinks that towards evening she may come to herself a little. He just told me what your reverence does — that I have need to look sharp."

The twilight was deepening around; and Willy, with Ally and Biddy, had drawn near the hearth, whereon a log or two of wood was blazing. Mrs. O'Grady and one of her daughters were also there, and the good woman was relating in a low voice some old reminiscence of her native land. They all believed that the sick woman slept, for during the last hour or two she had lain in a heavy slumber, when suddenly her voice was heard, low and faint, but yet distinct, calling "Willy!" There was

no other light in the room than that of the fire ; but when the boy, starting to his feet, reached the bed with almost a single step, he saw that his mother's eyes were open, and that she was trying to raise herself on her elbow. Stooping over her, he held her up, saying tenderly, "Mother, dear ! do you know me?"

"Ah, then, I do, Willy, thanks be to God ! But is it sleepin' I was this long time, or what? for I had such terrible dreams." She spoke almost in a whisper ; but her words brought tears of joy to Willy's eyes, and bending down, he kissed her. "Sure it was ravin' you were, all the time. But, thanks be to God, mother, dear ! that you're gettin' sensible again."

By this time the little girls had reached the bed-side, and, wild with joy, would have kissed their mother over and over again ; but Mrs. O'Grady quickly interposed, and gently drew them away, asking, "Do you want to kill your mother out an' out? An' you too, Willy ! come away from there, good boy ! you can do your mother no good ; so leave her to me till I give her what I was bid."

"Only let me ask him one question, Mrs. O'Grady, an' then he'll go. Was Peter here at all, Willy, since I took bad?"

"He was, mother ; he was here a good while this mornin', an' he said he'd come back in the evenin' to see how you'd be ; an' indeed, mother, dear, he was in black trouble when he seen you so low."

"Well, God be praised for that same, dear! there's a chance for him still;" and she raised her eyes to heaven in silent thanksgiving, while her kind nurse put the wine to her parched lips. Feeling much refreshed, even by the few spoonfuls given her, she would have expressed her gratitude to Mrs. O'Grady, but that good woman would not permit her. "No, no, dear, don't say a word about it; sure it's only my duty I'm doin'; be quiet, now, Mrs. Burke, dear, until you gather a little strength, an' then you may talk as much as you like. Light a candle there, children!"

"Well, but, Mrs. O'Grady," said the sick woman, "I want to tell you about a thing that's troublin' me very much. There's some clothes there in the tub, belongin' to a lady down town, an' she paid me beforehand for doin' them, too—God bless her kind heart! Now, if you'd be so good as to get one o' the girls to wash an' iron them, so that Willy could take them home, it 'id be a great relief to my mind, an' I'll pay you, please God, what I got myself for doin' them; that's half a dollar."

"Ah, then, if that's all that's troublin' you, Mrs. Burke, dear! you may make your mind easy; for my Anne there did them up an' ironed them this mornin', an' now they're aired an' all ready to send home, but I didn't know where to send them. Willy can go with them as soon as you like; an' as to the payment, *aroon!* I'll not take a penny. So don't let me

hear a word more about it. If God spares you life an' health, you'll do as much for me when I am in a pinch."

"Well, God reward you, for I'm sure I never can, that's all I can say!" was Mrs. Burke's reply; and her faint, tremulous tones alarmed her nurse so much that she would not suffer her to say another word.

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CHAPTER V.

A MOTHER'S DEATH-BED.

ABOUT half an hour had passed ; Willy was gone home with the basket of clothes, and his mother had fallen into a light slumber, when she was suddenly awoke by a low whispering at the door ; and, starting, she said, " Isn't that Peter's voice I hear ? Are you there, Peter ? "

" I am then, mother, dear ! " cried Peter, darting forward ; and throwing his arms round his mother's neck, he burst into tears, while the fond parent clasped him to her heart with a sort of convulsive strength.

" An' you'll not leave me again, my son ! I'll not trouble you long, an' I'd wish to have ye all around me at the last. You'll not leave me, Peter ? "

" No, mother darlin', I'll stay with you as long as you wish ; " and, as Peter spoke, the big tears rolled down his cheeks, attesting the depth and sincerity of his feelings.

" Well, now, isn't this pretty work ! " cried Mrs. O'Grady, as she saw the sick woman fall back exhausted on the bed. " Get out of the

way, Peter Burke ! don't you see your mother's not able to speak or to move? Go an' see who's that comin' up the stairs ; I think it's a stranger."

"It's Mrs. Watkins, mother," said Peter, who, having gone to the door, as directed, returned ushering in the lady, who had judged it better to let Peter come alone, and then follow herself. A servant also entered the room, carrying a basket, which his mistress ordered him to set down, and then withdraw.

There was but little satisfaction in the smile with which Mrs. Burke met the pitying look of her visitor ; and when the latter kindly inquired how she found herself, she coldly answered, "A little better, thank God, and you for askin', ma'am !"

The truth was, that poor Mrs. Burke felt sadly disappointed by this visit, for it happened at a moment when she was endeavoring to gather sufficient strength to give a solemn admonition to her son Peter, touching the affairs of his soul.

Mrs. O'Grady placed a chair for the lady near the bed, but failed not, as she did so, to express her opinion that the patient should be left undisturbed. "For," said she, "she's not able to talk, an' no one ought to speak to her while she's so weak."

Before any one had replied, Willy's voice was heard on the stairs, calling out for a light ; and in a moment he made his appearance with

Father Fitzherbert. "Here's Father Fitzherbert, mother, dear!" he said, and the effect was like magic. The poor woman's eyes were suddenly lit up with the brightest joy, — the very announcement seemed to give her strength, for she started almost to a sitting posture, and remained resting on her elbow.

"Thanks be to the Lord!" was her fervent exclamation, as the priest approached the bed, "that I see your reverence again. I know I'm not long for this world, an' I was beginnin' to be afraid that you wouldn't be here in time. But sure I might have known that my Heavenly Father wouldn't take me away unprepared, — oh, glory, honor, an' praise be to his holy name, it's little I deserve his mercy!"

"I am glad to find that you have recovered your senses, Mrs. Burke," said the priest, as, bowing to Mrs. Watkins, he took up the hand of the patient; "but your pulse indicates extreme weakness, and I would advise you to keep as quiet as possible, for a few hours, until your strength is somewhat recruited."

"Well, but, your reverence, I'll not be contented till I have got the rites of the church. Only hear my confession, sir, an' give me the Blessed Sacrament, an' then I'll be as quiet as can be, — there's somethin' tellin' me that my end is near, an' I'm sure your reverence would not hide it from me."

"Certainly not," replied Father Fitzherbert; "such a course would ill become a min-

ister of religion, whose duty it is to prepare souls for leaving this world. You are not in error, my child ;— the opinion of your medical attendant agrees with my own, and we both think that you have not many hours to live.”

Here the children, not even excepting Peter, burst into a passion of grief, while their mother turned upon them a glance of unutterable tenderness, where they stood grouped together near the head of the bed. “ Whisht, children ! ” she said, after a moment’s silence, during which she was evidently offering herself and them to God ; “ whisht, my darlins, there’s no use in ye cryin’ that way ; if it was God’s will I’d rather be left here a little longer, till ye’d be all able to do for yourselves, an’ to go on in the way of salvation through all the trials of this world ; but since that’s not ordained for us, I’ll give ye all up to the protection of your Heavenly Father, an’ he’ll do better for you than I could. An’ Father Fitzherbert, too, I’m sure he’ll watch over you, for God’s sake, poor lonesome creatures that ye’ll be when I’m gone. So don’t fret, children, dear ! an’ now all go away for a little while, till I try to prepare myself for eternity ; — do, now, there’s good children. Willy, do you take your poor little sisters down stairs for a little while, an’ you, Peter, get a chair for Mrs. Watkins near the fire abroad in the kitchen, if she wishes to stay a little longer.”

Mrs. Watkins did wish to stay, hoping that she might induce Peter to go back with her, as she now more than ever feared that if she left him alone to the influence of such a scene, she might give him up as lost. Ere yet she had quitted the room, she heard Father Fitzherbert tell Mrs. Burke that Willy had called to apprise him of her having recovered her senses, as otherwise he might not have come so soon.

"Ay, it's just like him," said the mother, in a tone of deep feeling, "it's himself that was always thoughtful, an' I hope God 'ill give him grace to watch over his sisters. If your reverence was talkin' to Father Maloney — God's blessin' be with him! — he'd tell you that my Willy had something good in him from his infancy; an' the last time he seen him, that was the night before he left home, when the priest was goin' away, after givin' us all his blessin', didn't Willy, an' him only a little fellow at the time, run after him to the door, till he blessed him over again?"

An involuntary smile curled the lip of Mrs. Watkins as she overheard this simple effusion; and, as Peter closed the door behind them, she looked into his face with a strange expression, half ironical, half comic, as though she would have said: "Can you be influenced by such silly notions as these? What a foolish woman your mother is!" And Peter blushed to his very temples, though he said nothing, but silently placed a chair for the lady in the chimney-cor-

ner. Mrs. O'Grady had gone down stairs for a few minutes, after Willy and the little girls, so that they were left alone together.

During the short time that the room-door was closed, Mrs. Watkins tried every art of persuasion to induce Peter to go back with her, representing to him that there was no apparent danger of his mother's death, at least that night, and he could return next day as early as he chose. "And what good will it do either her or you for you to remain overnight? I should think there are far too many around her, and that she would be much better if left alone with the nurse, who seems, by-the-by, a very sensible and experienced person. And then Mr. Watkins will not think of coming to fetch me, naturally expecting that you will be back with me, so that if you do not come, I shall really be forced to go home alone, and at a most unseasonable hour."

"No, no, ma'am!" said Peter, quickly. "There's no need of you goin' home by yourself, for sure I can go an' leave you at home an' then come back. But as for stayin' away all night from my poor mother, an' it may be the last night we'd have her, — oh; no, ma'am! I wouldn't take a mint o' money an' do it. God forbid that I'd be so hard-hearted or unnatural!" and the poor fellow's tears burst forth anew.

At this moment, when Mrs. Watkins was just about to renew her attack, the inner door opened, and Father Fitzherbert came out, ask-

ing for Mrs. O'Grady. Peter instantly ran to call her, and then would have passed into the room after the priest, who had left the door open; but Mrs. Watkins, moving after him, requested to know whether she might not see Mrs. Burke for a moment before she left.

"Yes, to be sure, ma'am!" was the faint response from the bed; and the lady sat down again, following with her scrutinizing eyes the motions of the priest, who still wore his stole.

"Perhaps, madam," said Father Fitzherbert, addressing the lady whom he knew only by Mrs. Burke's account, "perhaps you do not know that I'm about to administer the Holy Eucharist to Mrs. Burke, and you may probably choose to withdraw, for the present. It is usual for all the Catholics in the house to be present, if possible, when the sacrament is given to the dying, but it would be as well for those who do not believe as we do, to retire."

Mrs. Watkins bowed her acquiescence, and resumed her place near the kitchen-fire, though internally inveighing against the priest, for she was curious to see how these *Popish ceremonies* were carried on. But Father Fitzherbert knew well the irreverent curiosity which would alone have been gratified, and the total want of respect for the Blessed Sacrament, which, in the event of her remaining in the room, would have scandalized the children, and therefore politely hinted at the propriety of her retiring for a while. Willy and his sis-

ters now came in, and they were followed by the O'Gradys, old and young. All passed into the inner chamber, and knelt, as they entered, in respectful silence. Mrs. Burke lay calm and tranquil, with her eyes closed, for her soul was wrapt up in sweet communion with that God who was about to *take up his abode* within her soul. Her thin, worn hands were clasped together outside the bed-clothes; and, were it not for the motion of her lips, she might have been believed dead. But not so; for when the priest, approaching with the Blessed Sacrament, raised his voice, and said the well-known words, "*Ecce Agnus Dei,*" "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sins of the world!" she opened her eyes and raised her hands in fervent thanksgiving, while a smile of exquisite joy crossed her wan features.

"Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed. Sweet Lord Jesus, make my poor miserable soul clean an' pure to receive thee!" and while these heart-felt ejaculations still hovered on her lips, she slightly raised her head, and received the Bread of angels—the Bread that giveth life to the world.

Sinking back on her bed, her eyes again closed; but the radiant smile was still on her lips as she said in a loud, clear voice, "Thanks be to thee, oh God, my God! what more than

this can you give me? I have all now, praise be to your holy name!"

She then received the sacrament of Extreme Unction; and this last sacred rite being terminated, the priest beckoned all to leave the room, saying in a low voice, as he himself retired, "We shall leave you alone for a little while, my dear child, so that you may, undisturbed, offer yourself up to God, and thank him for his adorable goodness to you and all mankind."

The door that communicated with the kitchen had been left open, so that Mrs. Watkins, from the place where she sat, had a full view of the scene passing within; and now, when the priest took a seat in the kitchen, she said to him rather abruptly:

"What a strange religion is yours, sir! Who could ever dream that a huge system of superstition and meaningless ceremony like the Church of Rome should have power to bestow such consolation at the final moment? Surely that woman seems to meet death with joy, rather than terror."

The priest smiled. "It is even so, my good lady, — that faithful soul has no fear of death. And were you better acquainted with our holy Church, you, too, would find her the mother of all consolation, — being, as she is, the divine spouse of Christ, and by Him chosen to transmit to his children *the joy which passeth all understanding*. But, Mrs. O'Grady, you had

better stay in the room with Mrs. Burke, and give her a table-spoonful of wine occasionally. You will let me know when she wishes us to enter."

The conversation was then renewed in a low voice, and went on uninterrupted till Mrs. O'Grady made her appearance, and announced that Mrs. Burke wanted to see his reverence for a moment. When the priest entered the room he took each of the little girls by the hand; Peter and Willy followed, while Mrs. Watkins muttered, as she moved after them: "Strange that I have been talking so long with a Romish priest, without having been able to convince him of error in a single point. Really, I know not how it is that they can put everything they believe and teach in so fair a point of view, notwithstanding the intrinsic malice and the exceeding foulness of their doctrines."

The priest was struck, as he drew near the bed, by the increased paleness of the sick woman; her eyes, too, were dimmer, and deeper sunken in their sockets; and when she spoke, there was a hollow and ringing sound in her voice which boded no good. Besides, her breathing was accompanied by that rattling in the throat, called by the Irish "the death rattle;" — all denoted the near approach of the dread summoner.

"I just wanted to see your reverence an' the children here, so that I might give them up to your care before I leave this world. The boys

are, thank God, able to earn their own livin', an' even poor Ally an' Biddy can do little turns for any good Christian that 'ill keep them for God's sake. I don't care, Father Fitzherbert, how hard any o' them has to work, for no Christian 'ill put them to what's beyond their strength, so as they're with them that 'ill give them good example, an' bring them up in the love an' fear o' God. Oh, your reverence, if I could only know that they'd all be under the care of good, pious Catholics, an' that they'd persevere to the end of their lives in the old faith that all their generations before them lived and died in!"

"I am truly rejoiced, my dear child," said the priest, "that it is in my power to make your mind at ease on that head. I have been speaking with a worthy woman who carries on the straw-bonnet business pretty extensively, and she has voluntarily proposed to take your dear little girls and bring them up to her own business; while at the same time she will see that their education — and above all their religious education — be not neglected. She has no children of her own, and willingly undertakes to bring up your girls, for the pure love of God, being herself a true and sincere Christian. As to Willy, I have arranged with a very respectable house to receive him as messenger in their store; and if he is found trustworthy, (as I hope he will,) they have promised to promote him. Meanwhile he is to attend

an evening-school, and he can have at all times free access to my library, so as to employ his leisure hours in useful reading."

Mrs. Burke raised her hands and eyes to heaven. Her heart was too full for verbal utterance, but after a little time she found voice to thank Father Fitzherbert for his truly paternal care of her children. "Sure your reverence has done for them what I couldn't do,— a poor lone woman like me, that nobody here knew; but Peter, sir, what are we goin' to do with him, for he's more trouble to me than all the rest?"

"My dear Mrs. Burke," said Mrs. Watkins, with her soft, insinuating voice, "you have no need to trouble yourself about Peter; Mr. Watkins is fully determined to provide for him."

"Mr. Watkins an' you are both very good, ma'am, an' may God reward you! but I hope it's no offence to tell you that I can't let Peter, or any of my children, stay with any but Catholics. I couldn't die in peace, Mrs. Watkins, indeed I couldn't, if I thought any o' these poor orphans that I'm leavin' 'id be in the way of losin' their faith. What do you say, Peter? Wouldn't you rather be among Catholics, *asthore machree?*"

"Whatever you and Father Fitzherbert likes, mother," returned the weeping boy. "I'll be said an' led by you an' him, please God Almighty!"

"In that case, Peter," said the priest, "I know that I can get you into the same house with your brother. Your salary may be small at first, but you will have many counter-balancing advantages."

"Well, sir, as you an' mother wishes it, I'll agree, though I'm sorry to leave Mr. Watkins's, where I was as well treated as if I was their own child."

"The Lord be praised,—I can die contented!" murmured the dying woman; "but, Mrs. O'Grady, I want to speak a word to you."

"What is it, Mrs. Burke?" said her kind nurse; and her tears fell fast as she bent over her patient, so as to catch her low tones.

"There's a little tobacco-box of poor Andy's in one corner of that big chest within. Willy can get it for you, an' you'll get a sovereign in it; it's the last of the money we brought from home, an' I always kept it for a pinch; that'll pay you what rent I owe you. I think it's four dollars, isn't it?"

"Sorra penny of it ever I'll take, Mrs. Burke!" cried her generous landlady, with characteristic vehemence; "that sovereign will bury you decently, an' I can do without it. No, no, I'm a poor woman, but while God spares my husband and son their health, I can get along without the little penny you owed me. So I pray God to cancel the debt, as I do from my heart."

Overpowered by the excess of her gratitude,

the dying woman could only grasp the friendly hand held out to her, and raise her failing eyes to heaven, invoking a blessing on her benefactress. She spoke not again for several moments, during which the rattling in her throat was fearfully increasing. Raising her feeble hand, she made a sign for her children to approach; the priest placed them all on their knees beside the bed, and by a mighty effort the dying mother found voice to bless them.

"Be good children," she added; "be good men an' women, an' ever an' always fear God more than men; listen to the voice of his Church; live an' die good Catholics, an' we'll meet again in glory. There, don't cry that way, it's no use; but pray for me. God bless ye all!" She signed to Father Fitzherbert to put the crucifix in her right hand; he did so; and, with a smile of ineffable joy, the pure soul, purified by all manner of earthly suffering, well and cheerfully borne, passed away. The eyes were still upraised, and the lips in the act of praising God, when lip and eye were fixed in death.

"May that God whom you so faithfully served receive your liberated soul into the mansions of rest!" said the priest, solemnly; and by a gesture full of grave dignity he silenced the lamentations of the orphans, now orphans in reality; then kneeling, he recited aloud the prayers for the dead, in which all present joined, with the exception of Mrs.

Watkins. The good lady was just beginning to wax impatient, when a foot was heard on the staircase, and her husband made his appearance, to her very great satisfaction. No notice was taken of either by those who, absorbed in devotion, were supplicating the Most High for mercy on behalf of *the parted soul*; so without a word being spoken, Mrs. Watkins beckoned her husband from the room, and in an instant they were seated in their carriage.

Death is ever awful; but how fearfully drear it becomes when it deprives a whole family of a tender parent — an only parent. When wrenching away that last great bond of unity, it leaves the little community without a head, without a centre, lonely and detached units in the great human assembly. It was a melancholy sight to see the four children of Mrs. Burke clinging around the bed, whereon lay their dead mother, vainly calling on her who could no longer hear, and beseeching her to speak but a word; vain, vain their cries. When was "*the dull, cold ear of death*" ever reached or opened by human voice? For some time none of them could think of anything; the one pervading image filled the mind of each — their mother was dead, and they were now orphans in very deed. After a little while, Willy raised his head from the side of the bed where it had been resting, and looking around on his brother and sisters, he said, with an attempt at calmness: "It was bad enough when poor

father died an' was thrown into the sea, but then we didn't half know our loss, an' besides, we had our mother still, so we weren't so badly off; but *now*," — here his forced composure deserted him; for one glance at the dead face of his mother had subdued his little self-control, and when the others burst out again into tears and lamentations, himself wept and sobbed as loudly as either of his little sisters. Hitherto Father Fitzherbert had remained kneeling at the foot of the bed in silent prayer, deeming it best to let the grief of the children exhaust its first violence; but now he arose, and coming calmly forward took each by the hand in silence and led them from the room, without the slightest opposition on their part. When once in the kitchen, he said to them:

"You must now stay out of the room, my dear children, while Mrs. O'Grady performs the necessary duties for the dead. I would advise you to go down stairs for a little while."

Mrs. O'Grady, who had been kneeling just within the room-door, now came forward and announced that she would go for a "neighbor woman" to help her to wash and lay out the corpse, and insisted that the children should go down stairs, as the priest had proposed. Their obedience to the clergy was habitual; and they, therefore, went down with Mrs. O'Grady, while Father Fitzherbert remained to close the mouth and eyes of the deceased, and offer up yet

another prayer for her eternal repose. When the women entered, and prepared to commence their sad task, he withdrew, promising to return next morning to see the children.

The corpse was at length laid out in decent order, attired in the brown habit of the confraternity of our Lady, (which habit had been long ready for the occasion, as is usual with the members of that society,) with a cross of brown ribbon laid outside the clothes on her bosom, and the little wooden crucifix, the same which had fixed the dying gaze of her husband, suspended on the wall at her head. Then the children were again admitted, and several of the neighbors coming in, Mrs. O'Grady proposed that first of all they should say the Litany for the Dead. This pious duty performed, the remainder of the night passed away in conversation, which, borrowing its tone from the occasion, was of a serious and grave character. The two little girls had been prevailed upon to go to bed about midnight, and much pains were taken to console the two young brothers ; many a kind advice was given them, and more than one friendly offer of assistance. Both were too much absorbed in their grief to pay any great attention to these well-meant attempts at consolation, and they were sensibly relieved when the light of morning called the greater number of those present to their homes, to commence the labors of the day. It was only from Father Fitzherbert's promised visit

that they expected or received consolation, and his entrance gave them a gleam of comfort, which the mild and tender and pious counsels he gave them tended considerably to increase. He it was who represented, in clear and forcible terms, to their sorrowing minds, that as far as their mother was herself concerned, they had only reason to rejoice in her death; as death to her was but a transition from toil and suffering, and all the privations of poverty, to the happy eternity where the saints reign with God. Then he made them understand that such being the case, their own selfish sorrow must not be indulged. "You have duties before you," said he, "which must be fulfilled: duties to God, to yourselves, and to society; and to these you must at once apply yourselves, casting off that vain and idle despondency, which, however natural it may be in its origin, would undoubtedly unfit you for active and energetic application to the fulfilment of the duties to which I have referred."

Thus did he wisely and judiciously lead the brothers to a more salutary way of thinking, and prepare them for the devious journey of life on which they might now be said to enter for the first time. They still wept and sorrowed for the mother who had loved them so tenderly, but it was no longer with that wild, ungovernable grief which had at first swallowed up every rational idea, and precluded all hope of comfort.

The day of burial came, and Father Fitzherbert offered up the Holy Sacrifice early in the morning, that God might receive the soul of his departed servant. It was a touching spectacle to see the two boys — the eldest but fifteen — following to the grave the remains of their only parent, each holding by the hand one of their young sisters. The brothers restrained the violence of their sorrow as they moved along after the hearse, but the little girls sobbed and cried all the way, though continually reminded by their brothers that they should endeavor to be quiet while passing along the streets. Besides the O'Gradys, there were only a few others who followed the hearse, for the deceased had but few acquaintances, and she was poor, very poor, aye, and far away from the place where she and hers were known and honored. So they laid her in her "narrow house," with none by to mourn her but the desolate orphans who stood cowering together at the head of the grave.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BROTHERS IN THEIR NEW SITUATION.

IT was Thursday when the remains of Widow Burke were laid in their resting-place, and Father Fitzherbert, in his prudent kindness, advised the two boys to go on Saturday to the house of Mr. Talbot, their new employer. "It will divert your minds," said he, "from the gloomy thoughts by which they are now occupied; and also, by making your arrangements on Saturday, you will be able to enter on your respective duties in the beginning of the week. I myself will now conduct your little sisters to their destination, where I have every hope that they will find a comfortable home. Have you any matters to arrange with Mrs. O'Grady?"

"No, your reverence," said Willy, his brother, mindful of his past weakness, being evidently embarrassed when in the priest's presence; "we wanted her this morning to take some good clothes of my poor father's that's there in the chest abroad, an' see if she couldn't make something of them, in part of

what my mother owed her, but she wouldn't consent to take anything at all, because she said she had cancelled the debt altogether. We're goin' to leave them in the chest here, for Mrs. O'Grady says she'll make room for it below stairs; we wouldn't wish to part with any of the clothes, sir, (unless it was to pay my mother's little debt,) because it'll do us good to look at them now an' then; sure we have nothing else to put us in mind of them that's gone. My poor mother hadn't anything that 'id be of use to anybody, for her clothes were all worn out a'most, but we have her shawl an' bonnet, an' some other little things that she used to wear, locked up with the rest;" he stopped suddenly, overcome by his emotion, while Peter and the little girls burst into tears. The good priest, although his own eyes bore witness of his sympathy, yet thought it time to put a stop to this, and therefore desired them all to prepare for their departure. They descended the stairs in silent sorrow, the children turning several times to take a last look of the now deserted dwelling. When they had reached the foot of the stairs, where a short passage led to Mrs. O'Grady's apartments, Willy asked the priest whether they might not step in to say "Farewell," and Father Fitzherbert, having nodded assent, the whole four hastened away, while the priest himself walked slowly after them. He was just in time to witness the parting, and heard

them tell Mrs. O'Grady, with innocent exultation, that they had each some "token" of their poor mother.

"Look here, Mrs. O'Grady," said Ally, the eldest girl, "sure I have mother's beads," drawing them from her bosom as she spoke, "an', please God, I'll say my prayers on them night an' morning."

"An' I have something too, so I have!" cried Biddy, the youngest, holding up a pair of scissors. "I have mammy's scissors;" and she kissed them with childish fondness.

"Well, then," said Peter, "since ye're all showing your keepsakes, I have the best of all, for I have got her prayer-book, an' it was father's too."

"An' what have you, Willy? You're sayin' nothing, poor fellow!" said Mrs. O'Grady, smiling through her tears, as she turned to the silent boy.

"Indeed," was Willy's reply, "I wouldn't part my keepsake for all the riches in New York; here it is,—the crucifix that my father had in his hand when he was dyin', an' my mother, too. I hope in God it'll lie on my own breast when I'm dead!"

"Well, the Lord's blessin' be about ye all, children dear, wherever ye go!" said Mrs. O'Grady, with genuine fervor; "an' it's my prayer from my heart out, that God may keep ye all from hurt or harm, for it's yerselves that's the quiet, mannerly children, an' ye

ought to have luck! Go now, poor things, for I see his reverence is waitin' for you, an' I'm real sorry that there's none o' my ones within. But sure ye'll come often to see us. Do, an' God bless ye! for ye may be sure ye'll never come without bein' welcome."

A few minutes' walk brought Father Fitzherbert and his young *protégés* to the house of the good lady who had agreed to take the little girls; and she received them with so kind a welcome, that notwithstanding their natural timidity, and the sorrow they felt on parting with their brothers, they yet appeared quite reconciled to stay with Mrs. Williams, only begging of Willy and Peter, as they followed them to the door, that they would come soon to see them. The boys, on their part, were much affected, and the eyes of both were filled with tears, just as they emerged from the narrow street in which Mrs. Williams's shop was situated. The priest, who walked immediately before them, was accosted by a cheerful voice from the opposite *trottoir*, and a gentleman instantly crossed the street. Father Fitzherbert stopped, and said, with a smile, "I am very glad to meet you just now, Mr. Talbot, as it saves me the necessity of going to your house, and I am rather limited in time this forenoon, having promised to be at the Bishop's at half-past eleven. These are the boys of whom I told you."

"Oh, indeed!" said Mr. Talbot, as he

glanced at the brothers; "in that case I think you had better leave them at once to me. The business on which I was going when I met you can be easily postponed, and as Mr. Weimar is in no very good humor this morning, it will be just as well for you to keep out of sight, as I need not tell you how prejudiced he is against priests in general. But how is this, Father Fitzherbert?" he added quickly; "these lads appear as though they had been weeping."

"And so they have, my good sir, but that is nothing surprising, for they have just parted from their orphan sisters, and the parting has, as you can well imagine, renewed the memory of their grievous loss."

Mr. Talbot then addressed the brothers in a kindly tone, desiring them to go with him that he might introduce them to his partner; whereupon Father Fitzherbert bowed and turned away in an opposite direction, first saying with a smile, "I have no fear but that you will do what you can for them. Good-by, my boys, I shall see you very soon again, with God's help!"

During their walk, Mr. Talbot put various questions to the boys, tending to draw out their respective characters; and he was not slow in perceiving that the younger brother had many mental advantages, although but little indebted to education. By the time they arrived at his place of business his in-

terest was strongly excited, so that even without the earnest recommendation of the priest he would have done his utmost for the friendless youths. At length they stopped at a wholesale and retail hardware store in one of those narrow and dark streets which monopolize in New York, as in most other commercial cities, the greatest amount of the wholesale trade. Having dived into the further recesses of the place, without eliciting more than a passing glance from the numerous sallow-faced young men, varying in age from sixteen to twenty, who were employed as clerks and helpers in the concern, Mr. Talbot led the young Burkes to a desk in a remote corner, where an old man was poring over books and papers. One small window, thickly incrustated with dust, and looking out on a close, narrow yard, threw a sickly light on the desk with its ponderous ledgers and journals, and on the pale withered face and thin gray locks of the merchant, with his snuff-colored and high-collared coat buttoned up to the very extremity of the long sharp chin. He was seated on a high office-stool, and bent with engrossed attention over his desk.

"Well, I've been to Chambers's, and also to Black's," said Mr. Talbot, "and neither of them have heard anything of the *Sally Ann*; there is, however, a strong probability that she may get in to-night, as the wind has veered considerably since I went out."

"Ay! dere's always a chance, to be sure dere is," said the old man, somewhat snappishly, and without raising his head; "you be always lookin' out for chances. I tell you what, I tink de *Sally Ann* is gone to de bottom; but did you see dat oder man about de note, — vat you call him, Lumley, eh?"

"No, I was just on my way to call upon him when I chanced to meet this young laj of whom I told you yesterday; and as he could not possibly have found out the store, I thought it best to come back with him."

Weimar raised his head quickly, and darted a keen glance at Willy, who chanced to be standing next him, but seeing that there were two, he said sharply to Talbot, "Vat de deevil! dere be two?"

"Even so, Mr. Weimar," replied the other; "I have since learned that there are two of these boys looking out for situations, and as we can employ both just now, I have brought them for your inspection. Neither will look for high wages, — in fact very moderate pay will suffice for a time, as they have no great knowledge of business."

"And vat for have dem here, den?" interrupted Weimar, querulously; "vat good dey be to us, tell me dat, eh?"

"Why, as to that," said Talbot, "they both seem smart and intelligent, and for the rest, being anxious to learn, they cannot fail to make themselves exceedingly useful. Then

they are orphans, and have, therefore, a double claim on all Christians."

"Oh, ay! orphans! Vere you find all the orphans you bring in? Dere be always some orphan in de way." This was said in a pettish tone, and Mr. Talbot smiled, but his smile was a melancholy one as he replied:

"And that is nothing surprising, my dear sir — none knows better than yourself, that I, too, was thrown an orphan on the wide world. I was just about the age of the younger of these boys, when a certain person who shall be now nameless took me into employment, and he has been often good enough to say that he had never repented the act. What say you, Mr. Weimar?"

Somewhat softened by this judicious hint, the old man coughed and wiggled on his seat — he was fain to comply with his partner's request, and yet he could not easily bring himself to say as much.

"If all de orphan boys were like you, Talbot, it vould do vell enough, but — umph! — which dese boys de one you promised for?"

"The younger of the two, Mr. Weimar."

"Vell! you oder boy — vat you can do?" he said, addressing Peter.

"Sir, I have been in two places since I came to New Ycrk. I was goin' errands first for Mr. Miller —"

"Vat — Miller in John Street, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Humph! dat is good; vat de oder place, eh?"

"Mr. Watkins, sir; he lives in Henry Street."

"Vat you do dare? You not clerk, eh?"

"No, sir, I use to be cleanin' out the office, sir, an' makin' fires; an' I use to go messages there, too. An' Mrs. Watkins had me goin' to school, sir."

"Oh, den, you not so bad; ve'll try de two, Mr. Talbot. You put dem to vork right off—lose no time, eh?"

"No, no," said Talbot, with his benevolent smile, "I shall give them in charge of Saunders, and you know *he* will keep them to work. I thank you for making good my promise, and I hope we shall find the lads trustworthy, and attentive to business. Come now, boys, till I make you acquainted with Mr. Saunders, who is to be your tutor for some time to come." Turning back, he said to Weimar, "I shall go immediately about that note — I believe the man's name is Moreton."

"Ah, do, Talbot; and be sure you tell him dat de matter vill be put at once in de lawyer's hands, if he not pay to-morrow forenoon." Talbot nodded, and the old German bent again over his books, wrapped up in their contents, apparently, as though no interruption had taken place.

"Now, Willy," said Mr. Talbot, as they proceeded by a long dark passage to find the head clerk in the retail store, "you see I have said

nothing of the priests, for Mr. Weimar cannot bear to hear them mentioned — though I myself am a Catholic, as he well knows — neither have I said anything of your going to night-school, or where you are to board, but all that is easily arranged. We rent a house close by here, for the convenience of boarding our young men ; and when the stores are closed this evening, I shall introduce you to Mrs. Malcolm, the old housekeeper. But here is Mr. Saunders." He then presented the brothers to the worthy Scotchman, who had the chief management in the concern, and having seen them duly set to work, he said with a smile, " Good-by, then, for the present ; I hope to hear a good account of my *protégés* from Mr. Saunders." And he hastened away.

The day passed away tediously enough to Peter and Willy, for there were strange faces all around them, and even the accents that fell upon their ear were strange, for it chanced that they were the only Irish boys in the establishment. Late in the afternoon, Mr. Weimar entered the store-room, where Willy was engaged in burnishing up some things under the superintendence of Saunders.

" Vere de oder broder, Saunders ? "

" I have sent him with a parcel, sir, to Nassau Street ; he knows the localities around here better than I expected. "

" Vell, vat you tink ? Dey worth keeping, eh ? "

This was said in rather a low tone. "Talbot often mistaken; he too soft, dat certain."

"Well, sir," said Saunders, in the same low tone, "I do not think Mr. Talbot's judgment is now at fault, for I am inclined to believe that these lads are both intelligent and trustworthy. I like them very well, so far."

"Ah! dat good—very good." Then raising his voice, he said to Willy, "I say, you boy dere, vat your name?"

"William Burke, sir."

"You Irish, eh? and Cath'lic, I be sure."

"Yes sir," was Willy's reply.

"Ay, ay, it always de same, Saunders. Some priest get Talbot take dese boys. Who ask him take you, my good lad?"

"Father Fitzherbert, sir."

"Dere now," said Weimar, nodding his head significantly at Saunders, "I tell you so. Now listen, boy! you noting better of de priest's word for me; me no tink mooch of priests—but you be good boy; mind vat Saunders say to you, and be honest, and you do vell here. Tell de same to your broder. Say old Mr Weimar no care for Fader dis or Fader dat, but he like honest boys, dat deir work vell, and he pay dem vell, too."

Willy made a low bow as the old man passed him, and promised to do his utmost to deserve his good opinion. Applying himself with renewed attention to his work, he acquitted him-

self of his task to the entire satisfaction of the Scotchman.

"So passed the day; the evening fell."

And punctual to his promise, came Mr. Talbot. It was with sincere pleasure he heard so good a report of the boys from Saunders, and the encouraging kindness of his tone fell like dew on their lonely hearts. The establishment being at length closed, he took them to the house appointed for the *employés* of the concern, and consigned them to the care of Mrs. Malcolm, the old Scotch housekeeper; commending them, at the same time, to her special protection. "For," said he, in a low voice, "they are orphans, and Catholics."

"Verra weel, sir," said the old dame, speaking in a broad lowland Scotch, "be sure I'll have a watch o'er the lads; they may thank God, anyhow, for bringing them under your care." This was said more to the brothers, as they followed Mrs. Malcolm, who went before, with a lighted candle in her hand.

Mr. Talbot, before he left the hall, reminded Peter and Willy that the church was quite near. "And to-morrow, being Sunday," said he, "you can go there with Mrs. Malcolm, who is also a Catholic," he added, with a cheerful smile. "You see you have an advantage here over the others, who are all Protestants of various sects. Good-night, my boys! I

need not tell you that you can dispose of to-morrow as you please."

Mr. Talbot then withdrew, and the brothers followed their conductress into an eating-room, where the greater number of the young men were already assembled for supper. In the course of the evening the new-comers made considerable progress in the good graces of their companions. Peter, especially, won their favor, for he, being more lively and volatile than his brother, was less under the dominion of grief; and thus it happened, that while Willy was sad and silent, weighed down by the abiding thought of his recent loss, Peter, on the other hand, catching the inspiration of laugh and jest, soon laughed and jested the merriest of all. He had loved his mother with the warmest affection, and, when alone with his brother, still mourned her sincerely, but for him mirth was contagious; his mind, less deep and less solid than that of Willy, received an immediate impress from the surrounding influence.

The evening passed over, and good Mrs. Malcolm showed the brothers to the small room where both were to sleep, telling them that breakfast would be ready by eight o'clock, being an hour later on Sundays. When left alone, the boys sat for a while talking over their present prospects, and laying down various little plans for the future; then, having agreed that they would go next day to visit their mother's grave, and also to see their sis-

ters, they knelt and said their night-prayers. Willy then proposed that they should say the Litany of the Blessed Virgin; and, his brother assenting, they commenced, but had scarcely gone half-way through, when a loud burst of laughter from the passage without the door made both start. Pausing for a moment, they heard one of the young men calling to some of the others, "Why, do come here! just listen to the Burkes — they are actually praying away as if they were two old women; and to the Virgin, I protest!" And then the sound of advancing footsteps was heard, and it seemed as though several persons were listening around the door. A crimson glow overspread Willy's cheek — it was the glow of indignation — but, making a violent effort to subdue his anger, he resumed the Litany, as though nothing had happened. Again the laugh was raised outside, and Peter got up from his kneeling posture, saying, in a low voice, "Don't you hear them makin' game of us? Let it alone, I tell you!"

But Willy, without heeding his remonstrance, went steadily on with his prayer, nor stopped till he had reached the conclusion. Then he stood up, and quietly began to prepare for bed.

"Why, what in the world," said Peter, "made you go on when you heard them laughin' at us that way? sure you're the queerest fellow ever I seen."

"I'll just tell you, Peter, why I went on,"

returned Willy; and he spoke rather louder than usual, having a suspicion that some of the listeners were still lingering in the passage. "Didn't you often hear my mother an' the priest himself say that we ought never to be afraid or ashamed to say our prayers? What for would we be ashamed of prayin' to the Blessed Mother o' God to intercede for us, an' when we know we're doin' only what's right? I wouldn't care if they were laughin' at us till this time the morrow night. Just let them laugh away, an' when they find that we disregard their laughin', then, I suppose, they'll soon tire. Let us go to bed now, in the name of God."

Next morning, at breakfast, there was not the slightest allusion to what had passed the night before, the presence of Mrs. Malcolm making the scoffers fear to ridicule the young Catholics. Even when the housekeeper left the room, not a word was spoken on the subject; but, from the signs exchanged, and the sly, derisive glances directed at the brothers, the younger in particular, it was evident enough that the under-current of ridicule was going on. More than once did Willy observe some one of the young men raising his hands and eyes to heaven, with so ludicrous an air of mock devotion that himself could scarce refrain from joining in the laugh that followed. Then another would strike his breast with his clenched hand, and murmur some one of the phrases of the Litany which he had heard the

night before. The repeated bursts of laughter, which these derisive tricks called forth, overwhelmed Peter with shame; and although it was yet considerably before the time for grand Mass, yet seeing his brother's confusion, Willy said to him, "I think it's time to go to church, Peter; we know the way ourselves, an' we needn't wait for Mrs. Malcolm. Are you ready to come?" Peter got up in silence, and reached for his cap.

"I say, Hamilton," said one of the younger clerks, aloud, "aren't you for church this morning? The weather is very tempting."

"Not I, faith!" was the prompt rejoinder; "I'm for Staten Island. Catch me in a church such a morning as this! Come, get ready! who's for the water? We'll have a glorious sail; and you know we can say the Litany up stairs to-night." Then turning to the Burkes as they left the room, without seeming to notice his ironical hint, "You'll say an extra *Pater and Ave* for us, won't you, my lads?"

"We'll pray for all sinners, if that'll do ye," said Willy, with a tartness little usual to him, as, putting on his cap in the hall, he reached to open the door.

A general laugh followed this repartee. "There now, Hamilton, you've got it, eh? haven't you? the lad's not so foolish, after all." And as the boys descended the steps from the door, they still heard the merry clatter of tongues within.

When Mass was over, the brothers went together to see their sisters; and, if they had not met for years, the little girls could not have been more rejoiced. It was with glad and grateful hearts that Peter and Willy heard the artless praise wherewith the children spoke of their benefactress, who, it appeared, was a woman of rare benevolence. "An' sure she's gettin' us nice black dresses made, for she says we ought to have mournin' for poor mother," said little Bridget; while her sister caught up the words with, "An' it 'id do ye good to hear her how she advises us; an' she gets us to tell her everything about poor father an' mother; an' then the tears 'ill be standin' in her eyes, an' she'll tell us that we ought to be thankful to God for havin' given us such parents; an' she makes us pray for them every night an' mornin'."

This account was truly welcome to the brothers; and before they left they made it a point to see the good lady, and thank her for her almost unexampled kindness to their orphan sisters. Mrs. Williams then inquired how they liked their own situation, and was much pleased by Willy's account of Mr. Talbot. She was glad to hear, too, that the housekeeper where they boarded was a Catholic, and took occasion to warn them that they must not suffer themselves to be deterred from performing any duty of religion, how trifling soever in itself, by the covert sneers or

open ridicule of their companions. "Always remember," said she, "that you, as Catholics, stand on a high vantage-ground over all other religious persuasions, and, as you love your own souls, see that you never forget this fact. Let the heretic and the schismatic scoff as they will, — heed not their jeers; it is *their* misfortune to be without the pale of the church, and it is *our* duty to pray that the Good Shepherd may take pity upon them, and bring them in."

Willy saw with no small pleasure that his brother seemed deeply attentive to this kind admonition, which he, therefore, hoped might produce a good effect upon his mind, so keenly susceptible of anything like ridicule. "We're goin' ma'am," said Willy, "to see our mother's grave; and if you'd be good enough to let Ally an' Biddy come with us, we'd thank you very much."

"They may go, and welcome," said Mrs. Williams; "although I did not intend that they should go out more than was absolutely necessary until their mourning is ready for them, as their clothes, poor dears, are none of the best. But this is a duty of affection — a pious duty it is, too — and I will not refuse my consent. You will, of course, see them home again, as they might easily go astray in this huge city of ours."

"Oh, certainly ma'am!" said Peter, "an'

we're much obliged to you for givin' them leave to come."

About half-an-hour's walk brought our young *pilgrims of love* to the churchyard, and with streaming eyes they knelt around the grave, which they could not easily have recognized, had not Willy, luckily, noticed its position with regard to the gate. Piously and fervently did they all offer up their prayers for the repose of their mother's soul; and as they bent with clasped hands and bowed head around the holy grave, there could be no more touching illustration of the beautiful doctrine of the church, the never-ending communion, over which death holds no power. When they arose from their knees, Willy observed to his brother: "Doesn't it do your heart good, Peter, dear, to come *here* an' pray for *her* soul? It just seems to me as if I had herself to talk too; an', when I kneel on the grave where I seen her covered up, I can fancy that I hear her talkin' to me as she used to do, an' then I find myself uplifted above the world, an' I say to myself, 'Please God I'll never do anything to disgrace her bones in the clay.'" Peter, on his part, declared his intention to come often. "But," said he, "we ought to mark the grave some way or another, or we'll soon not be able to find it out."

"I was thinkin' of that, too," said his brother; "an' next Sunday, when we come, we'll bring a long, sharp stone, or a slate, that

we can stick down at the head, until such time as we can put a decent cross or a head-stone over her; if God spares us, I hope we'll soon be able to do that."

They now quitted the graveyard; and having left their sisters "*at home*," the brothers returned to their new dwelling, where they found good Mrs. Malcolm awaiting their appearance; as dinner had been some time ready. "An'," said she, "there's ne'er a one o' these graceless chieils comin' back to dinner; they're all sporting their figure down on Staten Island."

CHAPTER VII.

THE FOURTH OF JULY. — POCKET-MONEY.

NEITHER Father Fitzherbert nor Mr. Talbot had forgotten their engagement with regard to sending the brothers to school, and on the Wednesday following they both went to an excellent evening-school, whose teacher was in every respect qualified for the charge he held, being as conscientious in the discharge of his duty, as he was fully competent to fulfil it. Father Fitzherbert had been mainly instrumental in establishing this school for the instruction of boys who were unable to attend any day-school, and it was his practice to visit it at least once a week, so as to examine the progress of the boys, and ascertain that nothing was to be neglected that could possibly promote their improvement.

It was Willy's custom, moreover, to avail himself on Sunday evenings of Father Fitzherbert's kind permission to visit his library. The first time he went he prevailed on his brother to accompany him, but Peter had no love for reading, still less for that solid and

useful kind to which his brother, by the priest's advice, applied himself; and he could never be brought to go again. "Where's the use," he said, "of shuttin' one's self up there in a room over a book, the only evening in the week that we have to ourselves? An' then such books as you read in it: if a body had a story-book, or something that way, it wouldn't be so bad; but no, it's the Lives of the Saints, and Bible History, an' such things as them that Father Fitzherbert gives us, an' then "Gobinet's Instructions," the worst of all, for it's only fit to make one dull and down-hearted."

"Well, but, Peter," said his brother, "isn't that the kind of readin' we want? for it teaches us how to save our souls, and, besides, how to live in this world. An' then, I'm sure, if you want stories, the Lives of the Saints and the History of the Bible are full of them; an' they're not like the stories that's made up to amuse young people, for we know that they're all true. Don't we read just as wonderful things in them books that happened to God's holy servants as we can find anywhere at all? For my part, I'd rather read them than all the fairy tales and ghost stories that ever were put in books."

"You can read them yourself, then, Willy," was the rejoinder, "for I'll not go any more to Father Fitzherbert's. I'd rather have one leaf in that old book that Johnny O'Grady lent me, 'The Irish Rogues an' Rapparees,' than all the

big books in the library; so I'll not go any more, that's all about it!"

"Well, Peter, I'm heart-sorry to hear you say so," said Willy, "for I know you're losin' a chance that you may never have again."

"That's my own concern, an' not yours, so I don't want to hear any more about it," was Peter's reply, and Willy said no more. But he had soon a more severe trial to meet; for it appeared that in Peter's case, as it generally happens, the wilful rejection of any positive grace or divine favor was quickly followed by a grievous temptation which he had not strength to resist. One evening, in the course of the week following the conversation just related, when the brothers were on their way to the school, Peter suddenly said: "You wouldn't guess who I seen the day, Willy?"

"No, certainly," said Willy, "I can't imagine; was it anybody from Ireland?"

"Not so far as that," returned Peter, with a laugh, "it was Mr. Watkins."

"Mr. Watkins!" cried Willy; "an' where did you see him?"

"Sure, in his own office. Mr. Weimar sent me there with a letter, an' you never seen any one in all your life gladder to see another than Mr. Watkins was to see me. He asked me all about how I'm gettin' on, an' he says I must come and see Mrs. Watkins, for that she often talks about me; so I'm goin' there to-morrow evenin', instead of goin' to school. I go reg-

ular enough to school, an' can take one while of an evenin' to myself."

"Well, I suppose it's all right, Peter, for you to go to see Mrs. Watkins once in a while, because she was so good to you; but somehow or another I don't like you to go when you ought to be at school; an' besides, poor mother was so much afraid of your goin' next or near them —"

"Ay, she didn't want me to live with them," interrupted Peter; "I know that very well, but she couldn't say anything again me goin' to see a lady that was so kind to me."

Willy sighed, but he said no more on the subject, for he saw that his brother could not decently avoid going. "I wish," said he to himself, "I could see Father Fitzherbert, just to ask him what he thought about it. But I suppose I can't see him now, for it would be too late when we come from school, an' this isn't his evenin' to visit us;" and again he sighed heavily, for he had a misgiving that his brother was again rushing into danger. Just then they reached the school-house, and conversation was for that time at an end.

On the following morning Willy Burke was up and dressed by the light of the early dawn. "Will you come to Mass, Peter?" he said, awaking his brother from a heavy slumber, "the morning is very fine, and we can be back in time for breakfast."

"Can't you go off alone, as you do every

mornin'," said Peter, peevishly, "an' let me sleep a little longer? I wish you'd mind your own business, an' not be botherin' me; when a body's tired after their day's work, it's the least they may sleep as long as they can. God knows we have to be up an' at work early enough."

"Well, Peter, I'm sorry you'll not come this mornin', for I'm afraid you have a temptation before you, an' you stand in need of double grace. That's just the reason why I asked you to come with me now."

But Peter grumbled, and turned lazily on his bed, as though desirous of sleeping again, so his brother was fain to leave him, being fearful of losing the six o'clock Mass, at which he could alone be present, as breakfast was generally over by seven.

When supper was over that evening, Willy went alone to school, while his brother proceeded to pay his promised visit to Mrs. Watkins. On leaving the school-house, Willy was agreeably surprised to find Peter waiting for him at the first corner.

"Why, Peter," he said, "you're earlier than I thought you'd be. I was afraid you might be stayin' at Mrs. Watkins's till I'd have to go home alone; an' Mrs. Malcolm isn't pleased when any of us is out late. Well, how did you find Mrs. Watkins? I suppose she made a great deal to do about you?"

"You may say that, Willy," replied his

brother, as they walked on together; "an', after all, I don't find any one like her an' Mr. Watkins. What do you think, but they've offered me a dollar a week more than I have here, an' to let me go to night-school into the bargain. So I promised that I'd only put in this week here, an' I'm to go back to them next Saturday evenin' for good an' all."

"And you promised that, Peter?" cried Willy, in a trembling voice. "You promised to go back again to them, without consultin' any one — even Father Fitzherbert?"

"An' why not, Willy?" said the other, quickly; "isn't it my own business, an' not Father Fitzherbert's? I suppose a body ought not to cross the door-threshold, or buy a cap for his head, without askin' the priest's leave."

"Ah, Peter, Peter!" said his brother reproachfully, "you know very well that there's a great difference between troublin' a priest about such triflin' things as them, an' goin' to ask his advice about changin' your situation. Besides, you know as well as I do that poor mother, on her death-bed, gave us in charge to Father Fitzherbert, and that it made her die happy when he promised to watch over us, an' guide us. Ay, an' you know, too, that these very people made you disobey my mother, an' grieve her so much that she never got over it."

Here Peter broke in abruptly, being unable

to deny the truth of what his brother said; and resolved at the same time to have his own way, he would hear no more on the subject. "Well, there's no use in talkin', an' I'll keep my promise, let what will come or go; mother's not alive now to forbid me, an' no one else has a right to do it."

"But even Mr. Talbot," persisted Willy, seeing that all else failed to produce any impression, "what will he say to your leavin' without any notice, an' without bein' able to find fault with the place? I'm sure himself an' Mr. Weimar will have reason to complain."

"I don't care a fig for either of them," was Peter's reply, as he bounded up the steps and rang the bell; for just then they reached their domicile, and he was well pleased to cut short a conversation which he found troublesome. But Willy had no mind to renew the discussion, having resolved to apprise Father Fitzherbert of his brother's intentions, and he well knew that if any one could persuade him from a course so perilous, it was he, and he alone.

Next day, Willy sought and found an opportunity to acquaint Mr. Talbot with the whole affair, and ask his permission to go, during the day, to Father Fitzherbert. Mr. Talbot was both pained and disappointed by this information. "For," said he to Willy, "I know these people, these Watkins's, even

better than you do, and I am persuaded that they will do any and everything within the compass of their power to turn him away from the true faith. I am sorry, very, very sorry, that he seems so determined. I think it might be well for me to speak to him myself on the subject."

"Well, if might, sir," said Willy; "you can explain the matter to him better than I can, an' perhaps he might listen to reason from you. At any rate, sir, I'll go an' see Father Fitzherbert, an' ask him to come an' speak to my brother."

But whether it was that Peter suspected what was going forward, and shrank from the anticipated force of persuasion, or that he took an inordinate pleasure in following the bent of his own inclinations, and thus giving a proof of what he considered independence, it is certain that while Willy was gone to Father Fitzherbert's house, he suddenly appeared before Mr. Weimar in his office, and informed him that he was about to leave immediately. The old man was at first taken by surprise, and desired to know the cause of this sudden decision; but when Peter, in reply, could only tell him that he was offered higher wages from his old employer, Mr. Watkins, the German waxed wroth; and reminding the boy that he had consented to take him, at first, solely to oblige Mr. Talbot, he very politely told him to "Go to de Deevil;" adding: "You tink me

offer you more wages because you tink yourself of use here, but I wouldn't even let you stay now, so go off vid you. Your brother — he want higher wages, too — he want to go, eh ?”

“No, sir ; I didn't hear him say anything about it.”

“Vell, him be noting de vorse ; go now !”

So when poor Willy returned, elate with Father Fitzherbert's promise to see and reason with Peter in the course of the evening, what was his sorrow and disappointment when he found Peter waiting outside the door to bid him “good-by.”

“You needn't be frettin' about it, Willy,” he said, seeing his brother's change of countenance. “Please God, you'll find that I'll do what's right. You may be sure I'll never disgrace my father an' mother, though they're both dead an' gone, by forgettin' the religion that they taught me. Now you'll see, Willy, if I don't go every month to confession an' communion as well as yourself ; an' another thing, whenever you're goin' to see mother's grave, you can come for me, an' I'll go with you. Give my love to Biddy an' Ally, an' tell them I'll come soon to see them.”

“But didn't you tell me,” said Willy, “that you weren't goin' till Saturday evenin' ? What made you change your mind ?”

“Oh ! I'll tell you that some other time,” replied his brother, with a light laugh ; and seizing Willy's hand, he shook it warmly, and

then walked away with a rapid step, carrying the small bundle which contained his spare clothes. Willy stood looking after him a moment, with a heavy heart, but it was then no time to indulge idle reflection, so he hastened to his work. About half an hour after, he was summoned to the presence of Mr. Weimar, who, as soon as he made his appearance in front of the desk, accosted him with, "Your broder gone, eh?"

"Yes, sir," said Willy, "and I'm sorry for it."

"You like your place, den, eh?"

"Indeed I do, sir, for I haven't any cause to complain. I'm well treated in every way; many thanks to you and Mr. Talbot, sir. An' I hope, Mr. Weimar, you'll not think hard of my brother leavin' you, for the people he's gone to were very kind to him when he was with them before, an' they made him such fair promises now, sir, that he couldn't get over them."

"Vell, vell!" said the old man, in a somewhat softer tone than he generally used, "you very good lad. But dey tell me you great priest man, eh? you go to church most every morning, eh? how is dat?"

"I hope, sir," said Willy, in a deprecating tone, "that you do not blame me for that. Mrs. Malcolm can tell you that I'm always back some time before breakfast, so that my

goin' to church never kept me a minute from my work."

"I know dat well enough," was the sharp reply, "but I no like all dis going to church. And den, worse den all, you under de priest's finger, you never do noting without his leave. Now, I say no more dis time, but only dis: Don't go to church so often, dat no use, and don't let de priests humbug you any more; be good boy dat way, and no fool, and I give you de dollar a week more, de same wages your broder has from Watkins."

"I humbly thank you, Mr. Weimar," said Willy, "you are far too good to me, for I was well content with the wages I had; but I hope you'll not be offended, sir, if I tell you that I can't consent to leave off going to church, so long as I can make time to go without interferin' with the business; and with regard to the priest, sir, he's all the father I have, an' I'll never promise not to be guided by him. It was my mother's, aye, an' my father's, last advice to us all, an', with God's help, I'll never forget it. So, sir, if you don't choose to raise my wages just as things stand, I'm content with what I have."

"You strange boy, Willy Burke," said the German, after a short pause. "I tell you again, I like you better if you not so much Papist; but no matter, dey tell me you work well, and do every ting dey bid you, so you get the wages I say while ago. Go off, now,

to your business ; I too much hurry to talk more." So Willy bowed and withdrew.

Mr. Talbot soon after came in, and was much gratified by Weimar's account of his young *protégé*. "It is just as I expected," said he ; "there is in this Willy a simple earnestness of purpose, and a fixity of principle, which will make him a truly respectable member of society, as well as a sincere and practical Christian. In both these qualities — that is to say, steadiness and resolution — his brother is totally wanting, and I much fear that he will not turn out well." He, however, kept to himself his fears with respect to the designs of which he feared Peter might eventually become the dupe, for although Weimar had little or none of that poselytizing spirit by which Watkins and his wife were actuated, yet he loved not the Catholic religion any more than they did.

Father Fitzherbert called that evening, according to promise, and was much grieved when informed, by Mrs. Malcolm and Willy, that Peter was already gone. Nor was he much consoled by Peter's fair promises, as repeated by his brother ; but shaking his head with a desponding air, he said with a sigh, "God grant him grace to keep these promises ! — that is all I can say." His visit was necessarily short, as he was on his way to visit a sick person, who, although not in any immediate

danger, still desired to receive the last sacraments.

Two or three weeks after, came the Fourth of July, — then, as now, the carnival day, — the day of all days for the citizens of New York. On the eve of this great national festival, each of the young men in the employment of Weimar & Talbot was presented with a few dollars, — less or more in proportion to their age, — to spend on the following day. Willy Burke had two dollars given him, and he received it not alone with the gratitude that might be expected, but with a fulness of satisfaction that surprised Mr. Talbot, at least. No remark was made, however, and Willy retired with his prize. Next day he went and took his sisters, with Mrs. Williams's permission, to see some of the rare sights everywhere to be seen. They called at Mr. Watkins's for Peter, but Peter had gone out, and was not expected back till evening. Brother and sisters were disappointed on hearing this, and their affectionate hearts were pained by Peter's neglect of them all. Mrs. Williams had given each of the little girls a quarter-dollar for pocket-money, but Willy would not permit them to spend any of it. Neither did he break in on his own two dollars, but contented himself with laying out a ten-cent piece which he had in his pocket, and that solely for cakes and candies for the girls.

“Now it isn't that I'd grudge,” said he, “to lay out every penny of the two dollars I got

for pocket-money, but I'll just tell you, girls, that I'm keepin' them for something else, an' you wouldn't guess what it is!"

One guessed a new cap, another a pair of shoes; another would wager it was to buy books. "No, then, you're both out this time," said Willy, and then he added, in a low voice, "I'm keepin' my two dollars till I put some more to it from my wages to put a cross or a head-stone over my poor mother."

On hearing this, each little girl pulled out her bright, shining quarter-dollar, and handed it to her brother, eagerly saying, though in a low whisper, for crowds were hurrying on all around: "Ah, then, Willy dear! won't you let us put our money in too?—sure we'd rather give it for that than for anything else in the world. Here, Willy, here's mine!" "Ay, an' mine too!" said little Alice; "isn't it the fine thing that we didn't lay any of it out?" Willy took the money, and walked on some way in silence between his sisters, for their childish generosity touched his heart. Having seen the greater part of what was worth seeing, he left them at home early in the evening, and willingly accepted Mrs. Williams's invitation to remain for tea.

The next day being Saturday, Mr. Talbot, finding Willy alone in a corner of the warehouse, as he passed through, suddenly asked him whether he had spent all his two dollars.

"No, sir," was the reply; "I didn't break on it at all."

"And why not, pray? I thought you testified the utmost pleasure when it was given you!"

"Well, sir, that's because I have a particular use for it."

"And may I ask what that 'particular use' is?"

Willy modestly explained his intention, and also mentioned the half-dollar that he had got from his sisters. Mr. Talbot turned away without uttering another word; in fact, his emotion was so great, that he could not have spoken without betraying his weakness, as he deemed it; he therefore hurried away, while Willy looked after him, surprised by his abrupt departure.

Sunday came, and Willy called for Peter, as usual, when on his way to church. When Mass was over, they went to take a walk in the Park, and Willy told his brother that he was going to see about the cross, or head-stone, for their mother's grave, in the course of the week.

"But where's the use in seein' about it," said Peter, "till such times as we're able to pay for gettin' it done? It'll come to a good deal of money."

"Only four dollars, Peter, an' I have two an' a-half of that now."

"Why, I thought you had no money at all,

after buyin' your new clothes last week," said Peter, with surprise.

"Well, neither I had, only ten cents, an' I bought *sweeties* for that for Biddy an' Ally, when I had them out on the Fourth; but then, every one of us, in the store and in the warehouse, got some pocket-money, an' they gave me nothing less than two dollars in bills; then Mrs. Williams gave the children a quarter each when they were coming out on Friday-mornin', and they gave it to me to put in with the rest. So you see that makes two dollars and a-half, an' you can easily enough give the remainder, — it's only one dollar an' a-half we want, you know. A stone would come to more, they tell me, but, somehow or other, even if it was as cheap, I'd rather have a white cross. I like to see a cross over a grave, an' I'm sure mother herself, if she could know anything about it, would like it better than any headstone. What do you think, Peter? for I want to have your advice before it goes farther."

"Well, I don't much care which you put up," said Peter, "so long as there's anything put in it for decency's sake. But to tell you the truth, Willy" — here a deep blush mounted to his very forehead — "to tell you the truth, I can't help you to do it now, for I haven't a shilling in the world. You must wait a little, till I can spare the money."

"Why," said Willy, in a tone of chagrin, "hadn't you two dollars when you left us? an'

you haven't got anything new since then, except that vest."

"That's true enough," was the confused reply, "but I went out with some of our boys on Friday, an', somehow or another, I got through every penny of what I had, an' borrowed half-a-dollar besides, of Harry Lambert. I'm sure, if I had thought about this affair, I wouldn't have spent the money as I did."

"You know we had agreed," said Willy, in a sorrowful accent, "that we were to do it as soon as we could raise the money between us; an' when I got that two dollars I was sure we had enough, so I went an' spoke to a man that Mrs. Williams directed me to, an' he was to make the cross this week. But there's no use in talkin' about it now; I can tell him not to mind doin' it for the present, that's all."

"But can't either you or I get a couple of dollars in advance?" asked Peter.

"No, indeed," rejoined his brother, "it's far better to wait a few weeks longer, than to be askin' money before it's earned. I'll not do that at all. When we haven't the money, we must only wait. Come away an' see Biddy an' Ally."

When, in the course of the afternoon, the brothers and sisters were again together, and ready for a walk, they agreed to go after Vesper and see Mrs. O'Grady, whom they had not seen for several weeks. They went, ac-

cordingly, and were grieved to find that times were sadly altered with that worthy woman and her family. Her husband had fallen into bad health, and had been some time out of employment, while her son, the main hope of the household, had been induced to go to sea. They were now all depending on what Mrs. O'Grady and her oldest daughter could earn by washing and going out charing. Everything in and around the house gave sad evidence of poverty, and it was with heartfelt sorrow that the young Burkes noticed the alteration in poor Mrs. O'Grady herself, who was now as pale and worn-looking as they had been used to see her fat and rosy. Yet her welcome was as kind and cordial as ever, and, with adroit delicacy, she warded off all allusion to her own affairs. Before they left, however, Willy took her aside, and said in a low voice, for he had noticed that her husband was but very poorly clad, "Now, Mrs. O'Grady, if you can make any use at all of my father's clothes, here's the key of the chest; there's a good coat, you know, and a good pair of trousers in it, and I think a vest too, an' they're all too big for either Peter or me. Don't refuse to take them, now don't, for wouldn't we rather a thousand times that they'd be doin' good to somebody, than lyin' there moulderin' away, as they'll soon be."

Mrs. O'Grady put up her hand, and wiped away a heavy tear that was trickling down her

check. "Well, God bless you, Willy, and mark you with grace! I know very well what makes you speak that way," and she glanced at her husband's threadbare garments. "It 'id go against my mind altogether to take the things, but then, necessity has no law."

"An' I'm sure, Mrs. O'Grady," urged Willy, with a view to set her mind at ease, "I'm sure you needn't be ashamed to take the clothes, for we owe you what would be far better to you than clothes, if we could only give it to you; but we may, with God's help, some of these days."

"Now I hope, Willy," said Mrs. O'Grady, quickly, "that you'll never say another word about that; didn't I tell your poor mother on her death-bed that I forgave her the trifle she owed me? (May the Lord be good an' merciful to her!) So, if I take the clothes, mind it isn't in regard of that, only because you're so pressin' on me to take them, an' because, because, Willy,"—here her voice almost failed her,— "because we're not out o' the need o' them." She moved away with trembling haste, and Willy joining his brother and sisters, they soon after went away together, promising to come soon again.

A day or two after, Willy went up to Mr. Talbot, where he saw him alone, engaged in writing. "Might I make so bold, Mr. Talbot," said he, "as to ask you to let me have

two dollars? That's what I'd get on Saturday night, sir."

"Certainly, Willy, you shall have it with pleasure," said Mr. Talbot, as he looked with surprise on Willy's blushing face and down-cast eyes. "I dare say you want to pay for having that cross put up, of which you told me?"

"Oh no, sir! it isn't that at all," returned Willy Burke, hastily. "We're going to wait for a little while, till we have more money, for Peter has none at all now. Oh, no, Mr. Talbot! I wouldn't on any account ask you for the money now, only I want it for them that's in distress, sir, an' that we owe it to."

"And who are they, Willy?" inquired the merchant, kindly. So Willy, thus called upon, told how his mother had owed Mrs. O'Grady three and a half dollars for rent, and how Mrs. O'Grady had refused to take it when offered by his mother. "But it's not the same now," said Willy, "for poor Mrs. O'Grady is badly off these times; an' so, if you'll be so good, sir, as to give me the two dollars, I can put it with the two I have, an' take it to her. I don't want to touch the half-dollar that my sisters gave me, until it goes to pay for the cross, for I'd like them to have their share in it."

"And so you are willing to postpone the putting up of that cross," said Mr. Talbot, "in order to give the money that would do it

to your friend Mrs. O'Grady? Well, here are the two dollars, and I must say (although not much given to flatter our young men) that your conduct is deserving of the warmest approval."

"You are very good to say so, sir," was Willy's reply; "and I hope God will always give me grace to do what is right." And pocketing his money with a well-pleased countenance, he moved away. Turning back, however, he asked Mr. Talbot whether he might take time in the course of the evening to go to Mrs. O'Grady's. "That is," said he, "if there's nothing particular for me to do; because if there is, I wouldn't for anything ask to go."

"You can go just now, Willy," said Mr. Talbot, "and if Mr. Weimar asks for you, I shall answer for your absence." So Willy thanked him again, and withdrew. Hurrying along on the wings of gratitude and friendship, Willy Burke speedily reached Mrs. O'Grady's dwelling, and found her alone with her husband, who was now unable to move from his chair without assistance. Scarcely did Willy wait to answer the good woman's friendly inquiries, till, pulling out his little purse, he took out the four dollars and handed it to Mrs. O'Grady.

"What's this, Willy?" she asked, with unfeigned surprise.

"Why, it's four dollars I've brought you,"

was the quick response, "just because we had it to spare, thanks be to God for it! an' I couldn't rest a minute since I saw how matters were here, till I came with it. Take it, an' keep it, Mrs. O'Grady, dear, for it's your own; an' much good may it do you!"

Mrs. O'Grady handed the bills to her husband, saying, "Look there Barney, see how good an' merciful is the Lord!" Then, while the poor man sat gazing in silence on the money in his hand, a gratified expression resting on his haggard face, she turned to Willy, and catching both his hands in hers, while the tears burst forth like rain, she sunk on her knees before the astonished boy.

"Oh, then, may the great an' merciful God restore it to you an' yours, a hundred times over, Willy Burke! An' it's you that has earned a blessing for yourself this day, for we hadn't bit or sup in the house, nor didn't know where to get it; an' that poor, sickly man there, was just faintin' for something to eat. All the money we could raise, aye, every cent, we had to give to the landlord last night, for he was threatenin' to put us out on the street, because we owed him so much, an' weren't able to give him any for a long time before. The Lord's blessin' an' mine be about you, child! An' may you never know what want is, I pray God an' his Blessed Mother this day!"

Willy Burke could not stay to hear more, but it may well be believed that he had never

in all his young life felt so happy as he did that day. A thousand times during the afternoon and evening did he breathe a fervent thanksgiving to the Lord, for having enabled him to assist that worthy family in their great distress. Next day he took occasion to tell Mr. Talbot of the timely relief the money had afforded, and the benevolent heart of that gentleman was more than rejoiced by the news.

The six working days passed away, and Sunday came again. There had fallen some heavy rain during the night, so that the streets were wet and muddy, and Willy Burke, when he went to see his sisters, did not ask them to go to walk on that account. But in the evening, Peter and he walked towards the churchyard wherein their mother lay. They were just saying as they reached the gate that it was too wet for them to go in through the long grass, but as they could see their mother's grave from the gate, they stopped to look in. What was their astonishment (for Willy had told his brother, as we have seen, that they must put it off for some time) when they saw, standing at the head of the grave, a handsome white cross, with an inscription in black, but at that distance they could not see what it was.

"Why then, Willy!" cried his brother, "isn't that mother's grave where that beautiful cross is?"

“It is indeed,” said Willy, “an’ I think some one must have mistaken it for another : let us see if the stone I stuck into the ground is still there.” And in they went, but they had no need to look for the stone, which was, however, there ; for as they approached near enough, the inscription caught their eye. It was—
“Here lies the body of Mrs. Bridget Burke, a native of the County Tipperary, Ireland. While here on earth, she served the Lord, *in spirit and in truth*. May her soul rest in peace !”

“Well, thanks be to God, anyhow, that we have lived to see that sight !” was Willy’s exclamation, when they had for some minutes gazed in silent amazement on the handsome monumental cross. “Whoever did it, may the Lord reward them, an’ he will ! Can you guess who it was, Peter ?”

“Not I,” was the answer.

“Well, then, I’m not so,” said Willy, as, quitting the churchyard, they walked away together ; “but I’ll say nothing about it, till I see whether I’m right or not.”

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CHAPTER VIII.

PERSECUTION.

WHO is your brother's confessor now, or has he any, do you know?" inquired Father Fitzherbert of Willy, when, on the Saturday preceding the first Sunday of August, he had been to his confession.

"Indeed, sir," said Willy, "I'm very much afraid he doesn't go to his duty at all; and I wanted this good while to speak to your reverence about him. Every time I call for him, when I'm coming myself, he's sure to have some excuse; either he hasn't time, or he isn't prepared to go. It's no use my telling him that he ought always to have time for what concerns his soul; and that, as for preparing himself, he can do that in a short time, even in the church, while he's waiting, if he only asks God to give him the proper dispositions. He'll always put me off, and say, 'Well, I'll be sure to be ready next time,' but it's the same every time I go, so I don't know what's going to come of him, sir."

"Alas!" said the priest, and he sighed as he spoke, "this is just what I foresaw and

dreaded. Throwing himself, as he has done, exclusively amongst Protestants, and while his mind was still but imperfectly indoctrinated with Catholic principles and Catholic faith, he will, it is to be feared, gradually become imbued with the sentiments and ideas of those about him. His position is indeed a dangerous one, for he has not that strength of mind, or firmness of faith, which might secure him from the assaults of the tempter."

The next time Willy saw Father Fitzherbert out of the church he took occasion to tell him of the handsome cross which some unknown friend had placed over his mother's grave.

"And I have some suspicion of who it is that did it, sir," said Willy. "Except your reverence there's only another that I'd think of at all."

"And who is this other, Willy?" the priest inquired with a smile.

"Mr. Talbot, sir."

Father Fitzherbert smiled again. "Well, Willy, I believe you are not mistaken in your surmise. I have some reason to know that it was indeed Mr. Talbot who thus testified his respect for a true Christian, as he had well ascertained your mother to have been. He has told me, too, the whole affair,—that is to say, your meritorious project of having this monument erected, and your still more laudable disposal of the money intended to put it in execution. I will venture to tell you

that it was still more to show his warm approval of your conduct, than through respect for your mother's memory, that he did this. May God give you the grace, dear child, to walk firmly and steadily in the path of duty!"

"I can't go astray, sir," said Willy in reply, "while I have you to guide me."

"Ah, but you must not rely too much on any support or guidance that is merely human; learn to look ever for supernatural protection, and for the strength that comes from above. The time is already near when you will have me no longer; and I would, therefore, have your course plainly marked by a strong and steadfast will ere I leave you, it may be forever. I am even now on the eve of departing for Ireland, and at my age man has but a frail hold on life, so that it is very possible that I may sink into the gulf of eternity ere we meet again."

On hearing this announcement, the tears, which Willy sought not to repress, burst forth and rolled unheeded from his eyes. "Ah! but Father Fitzherbert, dear, what will I do when you're away, even if God spares you to come back, as I hope he will? Who will be to me as you were, and to us all, as well as me?"

"Shame, Willy, shame!" said the priest, though he was evidently more than a little affected by the lad's artless sorrow. "Have

you not still the right hand of the Lord to guide and strengthen you—even of him from whom I derived, and do derive, *my* strength and consolation. He is ever the same, Willy; and let who may leave, or who remain with you, you will ever find him a tender father, unless you turn away your face from him, and follow the gods of this world. And then you have the same sacraments to nourish and strengthen you,—remember that, my child, and I would advise you to choose Father O'Hara for your confessor when I am gone."

Though scarcely able to articulate a word (his heart was so full), yet Willy signified his assent, and soon after Father Fitzherbert went away, having merely called to see Mrs. Malcolm."

No sooner had the priest quitted the room—the housekeeper having gone to her kitchen—than one of the young men, who chanced to be present, addressed Willy Burke in a contemptuous tone: "So that's your father confessor, eh?"

To this Willy made no reply, for he felt the full force of the bitter irony with which it was said, and would fain appear not to have heard it.

"I say, Burke," repeated Wilson, in a loud voice, "ain't that your confessor?"

"Yes," was the short reply; and Willy arose to leave the room.

"Well, if that ain't a good joke, I know not

what is ;" and the speaker burst into a loud laugh.

Willy Burke turned short round, and his cheek, with its crimson hue, betrayed how keenly he felt the insult. "Why, Mr. Wilson, you must be badly off this evening for something to make you laugh. I'd thank you to choose some other subject than the one you're on, for if you knew but all, it doesn't become anybody to be makin' a laugh of what they know nothing about."

"There, now," returned the other, "there you go! Now what have I said to make you so angry, for I see that you *are* angry, for all you don't want to show it. Now, I just put the question to you as a rational being — how can such an old coon as that have any power to forgive sins? Why, you Papists are the greatest dupes in existence. I guess it would take a good deal to make *me* bend my knee to a man no better than myself, and tell him all my sins, great and small. And then the best of all is, his pretending to forgive them, as though he were God himself, or a messenger from him. Now how can you bring yourself to believe such nonsense?"

"So long," replied Willy, "as you are pleased to speak in such a manner of the doctrines of our Church, you'll get no information from me; and besides, any one that speaks of a priest as you did a minute ago, is not deserving of an answer from any Catholic; so if you

want me to reply to any question you put to me, you'll ask it in a different manner."

"Well, then," said Wilson, assuming a gravity which the mischievous leer of his eye belied, "I would fain know what certainty you have, or can have, that this priest of yours — I beg his pardon, and yours, for having applied the word *coon* to so holy a man — is really authorized to absolve you from your sins?"

"Indeed, Mr. Wilson," said Willy in reply, "I don't half like your way of talking, and I have a great mind to let you look for knowledge elsewhere. At any rate, I'll just answer your last question, and then I'll have done. I'm no great hand at quoting Scripture, so I'll not trouble you with any texts to prove the power left with the priests, but I'll just tell you that I believe it because the Church believes it, and teaches it to her children. Anything that way that I can't understand, I don't dive into at all, because I am not able to judge, of these high matters; but I just believe whatever the Church proposes to me."

"More fool you, then!" exclaimed Wilson quickly; "for what you call *the Church* is nothing more than a collection of priests and bishops, as far as I can understand, and of course they can make just such laws as tend to increase their own power over the people. I have really no patience with such stupid dupes as you and your people are. The

Church, indeed! What nonsense it is, talking of *the Church* in such a way."

Willy Burke laughed, as he arose to leave the room. "Why, your fun is all turned into anger, Mr. Wilson. Now I'd just advise you, before I go, not to be attacking me any more about my religion, for I can tell you that you'll make nothing of it. If you were to laugh at me every day and hour that'll come till New-Year's Day, you wouldn't make me ashamed of doing anything that the Church commands me to do. Whatever you Protestants may think or say, I'm proud and happy that God has given me grace to '*hear the Church,*' for you know—you that talk so much about reading the Bible—what any one is to be considered that does not. You go on your own way, then, and see where it'll bring you to; but for my part, I don't want to be regarded as either '*a Heathen*' or '*a P^ublican;*' so with God's help I'll always listen to the voice of the Church, and then I can't be wrong. Good-night, Mr. Wilson."

An insolent laugh was the only answer, and Wilson seemed disposed to let Willy go, without further parley; but just at that moment the door-bell rang, announcing some of the young men, and Wilson became suddenly desirous of protracting a conversation which he deemed capital fun, now that he was about to have auditors who would not only join in the laugh raised at Burke's expense, but would furnish

their quota of wit and sarcasm on the absurdity of the Romish doctrines.

Willy Burke was already ascending the stairs, on his way to bed, when Wilson, running out of the sitting-room, called after him at the top of his voice, while at the same time he opened the door for two of his companions.

"Hold on there, Burke! What need for hurrying so? I want to hear something more about confession and the church. You talk in a first-rate style; and, by George, you may make a convert of me."

"I don't want to make converts," responded Burke, dryly; "and if you wish to know more about the things you speak of you can just go to the priest, an' he'll tell you all about it, or if you like it better, there's Catechism taught in all our churches, an' you have only to sit down quietly an' listen, an' you'll hear all about '*Confession, and the Church,*' as you say yourself."

The laugh was now fairly turned against Wilson, who thus fell into the pit he had himself dug for another, and the merriment of Hamilton and Dawson annoyed him beyond measure. Muttering between his teeth, "I guess I'll be even with him one of these days," he was retreating into the sitting-room, amid the continued laughter of his companions, who plied him, moreover, with such questions as, "So, Wilson, are you going to the priest, eh?" "Will you ask his reverence's blessing?" when suddenly Mrs. Malcolm's shrill voice was heard

from the further end of the passage, as she emerged from the lower regions :

"What's all this clatter about, or are you takin' leave o' your senses, ye graceless loons?"

On hearing her voice, the three young men took refuge in the sitting-room, but seeing the light of Willy Burke's candle as he hastened along the upper passage to his bed-room, she stepped a little way up the stairs to see who it was, and was not a little surprised to find him alone.

"Why, Gad's sake, Willy Burke!" she cried, sharply, "what ha' you been doin' to mak sic like noise? Where are a' the itner lads gane to? What's come o'er ye a' the night, for a body would think you had a mind to pull down the house among you!"

Willy could easily have justified himself, and at the same time excited Mrs. Malcolm's anger against Wilson, but he remembered the precept, "*Do good for evil*," and that other divine saying, "*Revenge is mine*," and he stoutly resisted the temptation. "I hope you'll forgive us for this time, Mrs. Malcolm," he said, "for it was only a little joke of mine that set them all a-laughing; you see, then, the fault is mine, and I beg your pardon, for I know very well that you don't like to hear any noise or disturbance in the house."

Little did good Mrs. Malcolm suspect what had been going forward; but even as it was,

she could fully appreciate Willy's conduct. "Well, well, ye're a guid laddie, there's no denyin' it; awa' wi' you to bed, but dinna raise sic laughing ony more, wi' your jokes." Willy lost no time in gaining his quiet little room, and the housekeeper returned to her Rosary, which had been interrupted by the obstreperous mirth of the young men.

"What the devil did he say to her?" said Hamilton to his friends, after a pause of rather anxious expectation. "I was expecting every moment a full broadside of wrath from the old hag, and there she's gone down to the kitchen again, without saying an angry word. Do you think he told what you said?"

"I don't know, nor neither do I care," returned Wilson doggedly; "but whether he did or did not, I'll keep his impudence in mind till I have a chance of paying him home; that I will, or my name is not George Wilson."

"Well now, after all, George," said Dawson, who had not yet spoken since he had heard Wilson's account of his conversation with Willy, "after all, it really does appear to me that Burke is the party aggrieved, not you. By your own acknowledgment, it was you who attacked *him*, and you might have known, before to-night, that he is exceedingly sensitive in all that regards his religion. Now, as for me, I'm willing to acknowledge merit even in a Catholic; and I do confess that I admire the lad's steadiness of principle, and his immovable

attachment to the faith he professes. Another thing that strikes me just now, is his not having told Mrs. Malcolm of what passed between you, for you know as well as I do, that, rigid Catholic as she is, nothing could have palliated your offence in her eyes, had she known anything of it. I must say, that this same Willy Burke makes me think better than I did of Papists. And then, Mr. Talbot, I'm sure no one amongst us can find any fault with *him*."

"Why, you had better turn Papist yourself, Dawson," said Wilson, with a sneer, "since you seem to have such a leaning towards them. I suppose we'll have you going to confession some of these days."

"And if I did," replied Dawson, with a heavy sigh, "I might lead a far different life." So saying, he took his candle and bade the others "good-night," leaving them to interpret his words as they best could.

Leaving Willy Burke enjoying the calm repose of an untroubled conscience, let us turn for a little while to his brother whom we have, perchance, too long neglected.

Mrs. Watkins, as well as her husband, had quickly discovered the natural weakness of Peter's understanding, together with that pliancy of mind which made him peculiarly open to persuasion, particularly if it addressed itself to his vanity, which was, after all, his prevailing foible. Artfully and insidiously

had they worked upon this strong characteristic of his, until they got him persuaded that it was actually degrading for a young lad like him to be so entirely under the control of a priest, "a mere mortal like himself." And then confession! Why, in the name of everything reasonable, how could one man expect that another had power to forgive his sins? did not that belong to God alone? and if he gave such authority to another, to one of his creatures, would it not be making that creature like unto himself in power? "Do you not remember, Peter," would the lady or gentleman add, "how God had styled himself 'a jealous God,' and as such, think you he would invest these priests of the Romish Church, one and all, with one of his own divinest attributes? No, no! Impossible! Absurd!"

Alas for poor Peter! all unmeet was he to wrestle with the tempter. It was not for him, ignorant as his mind was concerning "*the faith delivered to the saints*," and being unable to detect the misrepresentation and the (perhaps wilful) perversion of the sacred text, he knew not what to say. Fain would he have stood up for the faith of his fathers, the faith (if such it might be called) of his own earlier years, but he knew not how to defend it. He had voluntarily thrown himself into temptation, and the armor that might have enabled him to resist its attack, was no longer his. His faith, alas! was weak and tottering, his

vanity exceeding strong, and he fell by degrees into the pit prepared for him. Yet not all at once was wrought the dread change. During many a hard encounter with the united forces of the enemy, he had endeavored to keep his ground, clinging with almost desperate fondness to the old tree which had sheltered his fathers from immemorial time, and shrinking with bitter shame from the idea of becoming an apostate, — a *turn-coat*, as he said to himself. But he sought not strength from above; he relied alone on himself, and took pride in what he believed his immovable resolution. But at every attack the assailants waxed stronger, and he weaker; they pushed home their *arguments* (as they chose to style their black calumnies against the Church of God, and their absurd distortions of Scriptural texts), while he could only draw back farther and farther, becoming ever weaker and more wavering in his resistance. The consequence is easily foreseen.

Meanwhile it will be remembered how fruitless were his brother's attempts to induce him to approach the sacraments. Thus did he voluntarily absent himself from those channels of grace, those sources of living water, opened by Christ himself for the comfort and support of his children while on their toilsome heavenward journey. Little did Willy Burke suspect, when he so sorrowfully complained to Father Fitzherbert of his brother's strange

indifference to the affairs of his soul, that already was that brother more than a little advanced on the road of error, and that *the germ of faith* could no longer be said to exist within him.

Nay, so far had he already gone in the way of sin and error, that after each of these unsuccessful attempts of his brother, he went straight to Mr. or Mrs. Watkins to boast of having "got rid of that troublesome Willy"; and he was sure to be rewarded by some handsome present, and some still handsomer compliment. "I really do begin to have hopes of you, my dear boy!" said the lady, on one of these occasions; "and I have no doubt but you will soon get over these silly prejudices. Then, and then only, you will become a truly rational being, and fit to make your way in the world. If you could once bring yourself to tell this brother of yours that you will not be hoodwinked by the priests any longer,—until you can do that, he will be always teasing you about these foolish ceremonies and practices of superstition."

On another occasion she said to him, "What do you think that elegant Mr. Mortimer said of you last evening?" (Now this Mr. Mortimer was a ranting Methodist preacher.)

"I'm sure I don't know, ma'am," said Peter, raising his large eyes to the lady's face with a look of intense curiosity; "I hope it wasn't

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anything bad, for he's a very nice man, altogether, and speaks so beautifully."

"Bad!" repeated Mrs. Watkins, emphatically, "no indeed, Peter; no such thing! He said you were born for a shining light, and that he was sure you would one day make a stir in the world; he could not help expressing his wonder, dear, good man, that such a boy as you, so clear-sighted and acute in your penetration, could have been kept so long in the trammels of Popery!"

Peter listened with a glowing cheek and a kindling eye; his heart throbbed wildly against his side, and the unholy thrill of gratified vanity ran like fire through his veins. "Well, ma'am," he said, "I can only say that it's very good of Mr. Mortimer to speak so kindly of me, and I'm sure I'll do all I can to deserve his good opinion, and yours too, ma'am!" So he hastily left the room, to indulge his pleasurable emotion in private. Mrs. Watkins looked after her dupe with a smile of triumphant meaning, as she murmured, half aloud: "One brand snatched from the burning! This is well, and as it should be."

It was the Saturday evening after the conversation with Wilson, and some three or four weeks after the discovery of the cross. Although we have seen that, from the first, Willy had suspected that Mr. Talbot was the unknown benefactor of his family, still it was remarkable that he never breathed a word of the

matter to that gentleman. Week after week he had received and pocketed his wages without as much as thanking him whom he well believed to have earned his warmest gratitude. Was it that he had forgotten it? Not so. Willy Burke was, of all others, the least likely to forget a benefit.

On the evening to which I have alluded, he waited in the office till all the others had retired; when, approaching Mr. Talbot, who still remained at his desk, he said:

"May I speak a few words to you, Mr. Talbot, if you please?"

"Of course you may, Willy; half a hundred, if you will."

"Well, sir, I suppose you thought me very ungrateful because I never came to thank you for what you have done for us all of late." Then seeing that Mr. Talbot looked, or affected to look, surprised, he added: "You know very well what I mean, sir,—the beautiful cross that you got put up over my mother's grave."

"What reason have you to attribute its erection to me, Willy?" asked the merchant, with a smile.

"Oh, sir!" replied Willy, with all that genuine fervor that belongs to the unsophisticated Irish heart, "oh, sir, it wasn't very hard for me to guess who did it. There was only you and Father Fitzherbert to do it, and I knew that his reverence hadn't the means, though he'd have the heart, God forever bless him! So I

knew at once who we had to thank for it, but I didn't say anything till I'd have the way of offering you what you laid out on it. I haven't spent a penny of my wages since, sir, and there's eight dollars and a-half in that purse," — putting it on the desk as he spoke. "If it cost any more than that, Mr. Talbot, I can pay you when I earn it."

Here Mr. Talbot affected to be in some degree offended, though in his heart he could not but approve of the boy's conduct. "And suppose I were to take your money, Willy; do you think that would altogether cancel the obligation? For it does seem to me that this offer of yours proceeds from an overweening spirit of independence! What reason have you to look on this act of mine as a loan?"

Oh, Mr. Talbot. Oh, sir!"—and it was with much difficulty that Willy restrained his tears—"if you speak that way you'll break my heart, you will indeed, sir! Oh, no! I know very well that no money can ever pay the debt of gratitude we all owe you, and, please God, if I lived a hundred years I'll never forget it. But, sir, when I knew very well that it was you that went to all that expense on our account, don't you think it was my duty to offer you the money, at least? Because even when it's paid I'll owe you the gratitude still. May the Lord reward you! and if it be his holy will, I pray that I may never die till I'll be able to show

you that I'm not unthankful. Do, sir, please take the money!"

"No, Willy, that I will not!"—and Mr. Talbot, as he spoke, could scarcely preserve a show of composure. "Since I must acknowledge that your suspicions are well founded, I have only to say that the few dollars which I expended on that monument have procured me more pleasure than I have for years experienced. The act was purely spontaneous, and done without the slightest thought of ever being repaid,—my intention being to testify my sincere respect for the humble yet distinguished virtues of your departed parent, while at the same time I had no objection to gratify your filial affection by seeing a decent memorial placed over her remains. Keep the money, Willy, and put it to whatsoever use you please. I am quite sure it will be well laid out. There—no more thanks, I anticipate all you would say. Go, now, and remember that you will never want a friend while I live."

"May the Lord bless you, sir!" murmured Willy Burke, as he left the office. On reaching the house, he found several of the young men assembled, waiting the appearance of supper, but Mrs. Malcolm was not in the eating-room. Many a significant glance was exchanged between them as Willy entered, and his cheerful greeting was only answered by dark looks and bitter sneers. Of late, poor Willy had been well accustomed to such treat-

ment ; and now, pretending not to notice it, he took a small book from his pocket, and sat down near a window.

"Pray, Master William, of what nature may your studies be?" called out one from an opposite corner of the room. "Piety again, I guess;" and his tittering laugh was echoed all round.

"It's the Life of St. Patrick I'm reading, Mr. Wilson," said Willy, raising his eyes from his book.

"Aye, it looks new," said Wilson, "I suppose Mr. Talbot gave it to you as a reward for your budget of stories just now. You earned it well, I reckon."

"I thought you said that you never carried news to Mr. Talbot, eh?" asked another, jeeringly. "Now we've found you out; there's no denying it this time."

Willy Burke smiled; for he was much amused to see the general attack made upon him, and all shooting so far wide of the mark. "Well," he said, in a jocular tone, "I have read in the Fairy Tales a story of a man — 'Fine-ear' they called him — that could hear the grass growing; but if any of you heard me telling Mr. Talbot stories, I declare you beat 'Fine-ear' out and out, for I never said one word about any of you. And then you're all a little mistaken as regards the book, for Father Fitzherbert gave it to me as a present last St. Patrick's Day."

On hearing this — and Willy's honest features declared that he spoke the simple truth — his adversaries were somewhat disconcerted, and more than one sallow face was suffused with crimson. But they would not so easily submit as vanquished, and two or three asked in the same breath: "What made you wait in the office, then, till we were all gone this evening? Why didn't you clear out when we did? Ha! ha! none of your shifting or turning, now, — there's no denying what we saw ourselves. What did you want to say to Mr. Talbot? for Henry Davis, as he closed the door, heard you ask if you might speak a few words."

"As to that," said Willy, with a slight tremor in his voice, that to his prejudiced listeners seemed confusion, "as to that, it's nobody's business but my own, and I have no mind to tell you. I never pry into any other one's affairs, and it's too bad that you're all so inquisitive about mine."

"Ay, there it is!" shouted several of the young men, in a tone of exultation. "I knew he couldn't deny that. You see he can't say a word for himself now. Ain't he a pretty lad to have amongst us? Ain't he now?"

Here Saunders, who had taken no part in the discussion, laid down the book which he had been reading, and demanded what all this meant. On being told, he sternly ordered the young men to desist from their attack. "I believe Willy Burke," said he, "to be incapable

of such mean tattling as you lay to his charge. I, for one, have been given some degree of authority over him and you, and I can testify that I have never seen in him the slightest desire to speak ill of any of you. Let me hear no more of this, or I shall be obliged to acquaint the gentleman of your unkindness towards this orphan lad." The threat was for that time effectual, and never after did his persecutors attack him when Saunders was present.

Father Fitzherbert's departure was fixed for the Tuesday following, and on Sunday Willy Burke called at Mr. Watkins's to know whether Peter would not go with him to take leave of the priest; but Peter was not to be seen,—he was out somewhere, and was not expected till late in the afternoon. Willy was sorely disappointed, but he walked away without making any remark to the servant, and went next to Mrs. Williams's to take his sisters with him. Mrs. Williams was not in the room when he entered, and he took the opportunity to propose to Bridget and Alice a little plan which he had formed for the disposal of the money which Mr. Talbot had refused to accept. "For you know, girls," said he, "that I have your half-dollar still." When the project was explained, it made the little girls jump for very joy.

"Why, Willy, how in the world do you think of such nice little plans?" asked the elder. "I'm sure you're always thinking of

something good. Oh, then, Bridget, won't that be the fine thing all out?"

"Yes, but, Alice," said Mrs. Williams, who had been an unwilling listener from the beginning, and now entered from the next room, "yes, but when you and Bridget put your money to such a use as that, you must have a little more to give. Here is another half-dollar for them, Willy — that will make their half-dollar a whole one. And now, children, as I know you are all anxious to see Father Fitzherbert, you can go at once. Be sure, Willy, you come back with the girls to tea; I want you here every Sunday evening that you can come." And so saying, she put on the little girls' bonnets, and laughingly pushed them from the room, saying, "There now, you want very badly to thank 'good Mrs. Williams,' but another time will do. Clear out, all of you!"

Willy then took his sisters to bid "good-by" to the priest, and receive his parting benediction. The tears stood in his eyes when Father Fitzherbert asked for Peter. Willy could scarcely command his voice to tell that he wasn't in when he called for him, and the priest only shook his head, for he saw that the boy was only too sensible of his brother's danger. Before leaving, Willy asked whether he might not come again the next evening after school. "For," said he, "I have a book belonging to your reverence — it's the History of the

Church, sir — and I didn't bring it with me, because I wanted to see your reverence again before you go." Having received a kind and cordial consent, Willy made his best bow, and his sisters their lowest courtesies, and all three retired.

On the following evening, punctual to his promise, came Willy Burke, and he fortunately found Father Fitzherbert alone, poring over some old papers. "Well, Willy," said the old man, with a benignant smile, "you are come to spend the last evening with the old priest. I expect Mr. Talbot here by and by, as he was good enough to say he would come."

"Then I must hurry and tell your reverence what I came for," said Willy; "I wouldn't like Mr. Talbot to hear me. First, there's your book, sir, and I'm forever obliged to you, not only for it, but for all the fine books ever you lent me." He laid the book on the table, and then drawing from the pocket of his overcoat a small parcel, he opened it quickly, and disclosed a very beautiful silver crucifix, some five or six inches long. This, sir," said he, "is a little present that I would wish to send to Father Maloney, for you said you hoped to see him. You'll be good enough to tell him, sir, that it was Andy Burke's children sent it as a small token of their gratitude, and to show him that they haven't forgotten him."

"But, Willy," said the priest, "I should

rather tell my old friend that it was yourself, Willy Burke, his old favorite, that sent this beautiful present." He spoke inquiringly, and Willy eagerly replied:

"Oh no, sir, by no manner of means! Sure didn't Alice and Bridget put in a dollar? And as for poor Peter, sir, I wouldn't for the world that Father Maloney would think that he'd forget him any more than us. Oh, no, your reverence, if you please, you'll say, 'Andy Burke's children.'"

"Well, well," said the good priest, who was in reality much gratified by the result of his own question, "I'll say whatever you wish, my young friend. But what a beautiful thing this is, even apart from its religious value—the workmanship is exquisite."

"Does your reverence indeed think so?" said Willy, with a brightening countenance; "then if I'm not glad it's a wonder, for I just got another like it for your reverence, and I gave you Father Maloney's first, till I'd see what you thought of it. Won't you take it, Father Fitzherbert?" for he saw that the priest drew back and remained silent. "Sure, sir, if you had seen the little girls when I told them of what I intended doing with the money—if you had seen how overjoyed they were—you wouldn't have the heart to refuse it."

"I do not mean to refuse your gift, my child," said the priest in a low voice, "though I confess myself unwilling to receive so costly

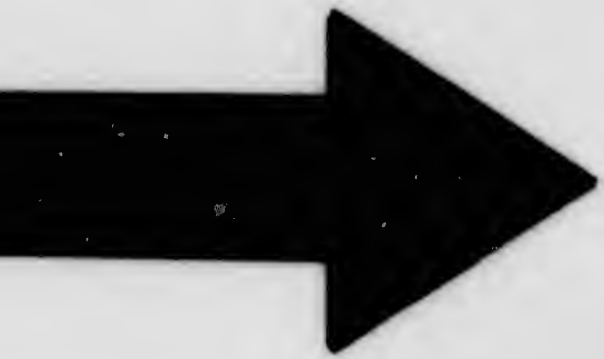
a present from you friendless orphans. But I well know the pleasure you have in giving it, and I cannot bring myself to inflict upon you the pain of a disappointment."

"Thank you, sir," said Willy, as though he had just received some great favor. "And now, your reverence, I'll just trouble you with another little parcel for the stand. There's our old school-master, sir, Master Dogherty — Father Maloney will have him come to see you — and I want to send him this prayer-book. It's one that I got myself three or four months ago, and as it's a nice gilt one, sir, and not a bit soiled yet, the old man will be well pleased to get it all the road from America. I hope, your reverence, I'm not giving you too much trouble?"

"By no means, Willy;" and the old man wiped away a tear as he spoke. "And now, in return, let me give you some advice that you may find beneficial. But hush! here's Mr. Talbot."

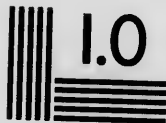
"Oh then, your reverence, just give me your blessing, and I'll be off before he gets in;" and kneeling at the feet of the venerable man, he meekly bowed his head and received the benediction: then rising, he darted from the room by one door just as Mr. Talbot entered by another.





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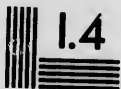
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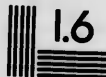
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CHAPTER IX.

WILLY BEGINS TO FIND FAVOR IN MR. WEIMAR'S
SIGHT.

FATHER FITZHERBERT was gone, and Willy Burke sadly felt that he had lost a second father. Aye, "lost," said he to himself, "for sure he looked like a corpse for some time past, and then when the doctors ordered him to go to Ireland for the good of his health, they must have thought him far gone ; — lost he is to me, then, I'm afraid, and that's the heavy loss all out ; for who will advise me, and take the same trouble with me that he did? Father O'Hara, God bless him ! seems just as kind and as fatherly, but he doesn't know us as poor Father Fitzherbert did, nor he can't speak to us of our mother, and put us in mind of following her example. Well, well, it's God's will, I see, that we're to be left altogether to ourselves, and sure we have him always to look to for comfort and support, so all we have to do is to keep his commandments before our eyes, and apply to him when any trouble comes upon us ; there's no use in grieving about what can't be helped, and besides, it's

sinful; it's like rebelling against God's holy will. Courage, then!" And thus did he endeavor to reason away his sadness, applying himself, at the same time, with renewed attention to fulfil the duties of his state. It is true his situation had latterly become far from comfortable, owing to the persevering malice of his companions, who laid hold of every opportunity of annoying him, and that all the more frequently, as they could not but see that he never made a complaint, although they constantly accused him of tattling. Matters were in this position, when, some weeks after Father Fitzherbert's departure, Mr. Saunders one day beckoned Willy into the office where he was alone. Having looked around with all the cool caution of his countrymen, to ascertain that no one was listening, the clerk approached Willy Burke, who could not help wondering at all this preparation. "I have not a moment to lose, Willy, in what I have to say, as Mr. Weimar will be here presently. I have for some time past observed that you are subjected to a constant series of annoyances, which, however trifling they may be in their nature, are calculated to make your position anything but comfortable. Your wages, too, are small; what think you, then, of taking a new situation, should you be offered one with higher wages?"

Willy was taken by surprise, yet he did not hesitate a moment in replying: "No, Mr.

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Saunders ; many thanks to you, sir, for being so thoughtful about me, but it isn't wages would tempt me to leave where I am ; and as for the trials that you speak of, sir, I can't blame either Mr. Weimar or Mr. Talbot for any of them. — neither of them knows the way I'm treated ; and I'm sure if I was only to let them know, they'd soon put a stop to it, so I'll not leave them on that account, Mr. Saunders."

Saunders was somewhat surprised, for he had evidently expected to find his proposal even eagerly accepted. "But," said he, "would you not like to get away from amongst these lads altogether? In the place which I have in view for you, I can assure you you will have no such annoyance on account of your religion."

"Ah, sir," returned Willy with a smile, "if I hadn't that to bear, I'd be sure to have something else. Every Christian has to carry his cross, and when mine is so very light, I'm sure I needn't complain. If I had nothing to trouble me, sir, I might begin to forget God ; but so long as one has little trials and vexations to bear, they have to be asking grace from above to assist them."

"Well, I know not what to say to you, Willy!" said Saunders, after a moment's reflection ; "I have never seen much of Catholics till I met Mr. Talbot, and I begin to think that the accounts given of you in books are

not *quite* correct. Are these sentiments and principles of yours commonly inculcated by the Roman Catholic priests?"

"Why, then, Mr. Saunders, what I'm after telling you is just what I have heard from the altar, and from my confessors, too, ever since I could understand a word; sure it's what every Catholic hears and is taught, from his infancy up; but, God help us! we don't often put what the priests tell us in practice; if we did, sir, it would be a different world altogether, at least with us Catholics."

"I really begin to think so," was the reply; for Saunders was, on the whole, a man of enlightened mind, and liberal, withal, in his opinions. "But, as a last word, Willy, your present wages are not at all equal to your deserving, — you begin to be exceedingly useful here, and your scrupulous honesty renders you above all value to your employers. Think of what I have said, my young friend, and do not lightly cast away good-luck."

"You're very good, sir," said Willy, in a decided tone, "but I don't want to think any more about the matter. When my present employers first took me in, I wasn't worth so much to them as I am now; and I suppose, in the course of some time, if they're pleased with me, they'll give me a little advance. At any rate, Mr. Saunders, I'll not leave them while they're willing to keep me. Have you

anything more to say to me, sir? for I must go now to something I was bid to do."

"You not go yet, Willy Burke," said a voice that made both start; and opening the door of a closet just behind the desk, out stepped Mr. Weimar. His face wore just the same expression as usual, but there was a slight tremor in his shrill voice as he spoke.

"Now, Saunders," said he; "dere is no harm dat you leave us when you goin' into bisness for your own self, dat all well, an' we not say you wrong; but what for you try to make dis boy go too, eh? You know him good boy, faithful boy, and den you make him leave us, and go vid you. I not expect dat from you, Saunders, and I very sorry, very sorry indeed."

"Well, Mr. Weimar," said the clerk, by way of apology, "you have so many young men in your employment (and generally speaking they are very good, as the world goes), that I thought you might spare this young lad, the youngest of all."

"Aye, but better you ask us first, if we vish to part him; dat be de fair way to do. Now, Willy Burke," said the old man, and his voice became softer, perhaps unconsciously to himself, "now, dis de second time dat we find you refuse to leave us; dis last time you were offered more vages, you not consent, and you did right. Now, I vell pleased with you, and you shall have two dollars a month more than

you had. But vat dese boys dey do to you? I not hear dat before."

"Oh, sir!" said Willy, "I rather you wouldn't ask me; it's not worth talking about, and I wouldn't on any account trouble you or Mr. Talbot with such little trifles. But, sir, about the wages, I'm very thankful to you, and if God spares me life and health I hope to prove my gratitude."

"So you not tell me vat de young lads do to you?" asked Mr. Weimar, the harsh lines of his wrinkled face relaxing into a smile of even kindly meaning. "Ha! ha! me heard all you say to Saunders, — dat your cross, eh? You not want to shake it off, eh? Go off, you young Papist! I not find you so strange now, since I know de reason why you act so." And shaking his hand playfully at Willy, he sent him away, being desirous to speak with Saunders, who was, indeed, about to commence business on his own account.

When Willy found himself alone, he raised his hands and eyes to heaven in fervent thanksgiving, that God had so strengthened him in the moment of temptation. Although he had not the slightest suspicion that any one, much less Mr. Weimar, had been within hearing, yet it certainly increased his satisfaction that the conversation had been heard by him above all others. "For," said he to himself, "Mr. Weimar used to think that there was scarcely a Catholic to be depended on; and I

rejoice, on account of our holy religion, that he is pleased with my conduct. Thanks and praise be to you, O God! that kept me from doing what I should not do."

When he entered his room that night, what should he see lying on the table but a handsome prayer-book, much more richly bound than that which he had sent to Master Dogherty; and when he ran to take it up and examine it, he perceived, written on one of the blank leaves in the front of the book — "A present from Mr. H. Talbot to William Burke, being intended to replace the book sent to Ireland. Also, a mark of Mr. Talbot's warm approval of still more recent good conduct."

Willy stood gazing in silence on the precious volume, and gradually his cheeks assumed a crimson glow; then the tears rushed to his eyes, and for a moment he could scarce utter a word. After a little, he fell on his knees.

"Ah, then, may the Lord's blessing and mine be about you, Mr. Talbot!" he exclaimed, almost aloud; "sure it's yourself that's always doin' something to make people happy. Now I'll say a prayer for you, please God, before I begin my night-prayers."

After the prayers were all said, and Willy in his bed, he began to think how Mr. Talbot had found out about the sending of the prayer-book to Master Dogherty, and he saw at once that Father Fitzherbert had betrayed him. "But, then," said he to himself, "sure I know

why his reverence did it, he wanted to make Mr. Talbot think well of me; and I suppose when he *was* telling, that he didn't forget about the crosses either. Well, well, it's all for the best!" And with this consoling reflection, he closed his eyes and fell asleep.

A few days after, Willy Burke was agreeably surprised by a visit from his brother. It was Sunday afternoon, the weather beautifully fine, and Peter proposed a walk. "With all my heart," said Willy; "and when we are out we can go to see mother's grave — it's long since we went there together — and you can see the girls before we come back. They're all the time wondering why you don't come as often as you used to do."

"Well, about going to the churchyard," said Peter, evading any reply to his brother's last remark, "we can leave that till the next time I come. But I want particularly to see Alice and Bridget. Do you know they must be greatly improved, Willy, for Mrs. Watkins saw them a few days ago — on Wednesday, I think — and she says they're two nice little girls."

"And where did Mrs. Watkins see them — if it's a fair question?" asked Willy, dryly.

"Why, you know," answered his brother, "she often told me that she'd like to see them, and so she sent and ordered a bonnet at Mrs. Williams's, and requested that either Bridget or Alice Burke might be sent home with it,

so Mrs. Williams sent the two, as it was getting a little late in the evening. That's the way she managed it, and when she talked a little while to the girls, she was so taken up with them that she can think of nothing else ever since."

"Dear me," said Willy, still more dryly, "how mighty easy it is to catch her fancy! And so I suppose she could find it in her heart to take one of them, or both, for that matter, when they're such *nice little girls*, eh, Peter?"

"You've just guessed it," said Peter. "She says it's the greatest pity in the world to see such girls as them in the way they are."

"To be sure; that's just what I've thought myself," retorted Willy, with ironical gravity. "And so your good Mrs. Watkins sent you to-day to try and coax them to go to her? Now tell the truth, Peter, wasn't that the reason why you came to see us?"

"Well, did I ever see such a curious boy!" said Peter, evasively; "don't you know very well I'd come of my own accord? and more shame for me if I wouldn't."

"Aye, shame indeed! but then, you needn't be turning or shifting about it; you came to-day because Mrs. Watkins sent you, — that's the whole thing. And you say she'd take the two girls?"

"She'd take one — Alice she'd like best — and another lady, a friend of hers, a rich lady, too, would be glad to get Bridget; and they'd

bring them up so that they'd never have to do a hard day's work. They'd be as well off as any ladies."

"Well, I don't want to have them made ladies of," said Willy, quickly; "I want them to get their decent trade learnt, so that they'll be able to do for themselves; and I'd rather a thousand times see them working hard with Mrs. Williams, where they see nothing but what's good, than to have them sitting up in idleness with Mrs. Watkins and the other 'rich lady,' learning nothing at all but how to turn up their noses at their best friends, and, worse than all, to have them getting to be ashamed of being Catholics. And, for the matter of that, it's not long they'd be so. No, no, Peter, you may go back and tell Mrs. Watkins that they're well enough where they are; and that if they hadn't a place that I liked, I'd give them every penny of my little wages, and beg the clothes to cover me, sooner than let either of them go to her or any one like her. I'm sure we've got enough of Mr. and Mrs. Watkins already; and, please God, they'll not catch either Alice or Bridget. With God's help, we'll not lose *them*, poor little girls!" He spoke bitterly, and more angrily than usual, and Peter replied with a flushed cheek:

"And do you think I'm going to take your opinion for an answer, saucy fellow that you are? Not I, indeed! I'll go straight and see the

girls themselves, and hear what they'll say about it."

"And I'll go with you then," said Willy, in a milder tone; "for I'm afraid you're not to be trusted, Peter. You are not sensible of the danger you'd bring them into."

"Well, this is too bad!" said the elder brother, angrily, as they walked along together. "Now, I'd like to know what are *you* making of all of this great piety of yours! You that's such a good Catholic all out! What good is it doing you?"

"Why," said Willy, "if it goes to that, even in a worldly point of view I'm just as well off as you are, though, God help you! I'm afraid you never stand up as you ought to do for your religion. I have a dollar a month now more than you have."

"What!" said Peter, turning short round; "have they raised your wages again? Oh, I see how it is," he added contemptuously, "it's Mr. Talbot that's doing it; he wants to humor you up, and so Mr. Watkins says."

"Well, Mr. Watkins may say what he will," replied Willy, "but it wasn't Mr. Talbot that raised my wages either time; it was Mr. Weimar."

"Why, how in the world did that happen?" asked Peter, evidently taken aback. And when Willy told him, he remained silent for a considerable time. He was thinking what a strange thing it was that his brother — two

years younger than he — could so stoutly resist and even overcome temptation, while he was almost sure to give way, even at the very first assault. Yet he would not acknowledge that such were his ideas; and when Willy, seeing a certain confusion in his face, and therefore partly guessing his thoughts, would have persuaded him to apply for grace and strength at the fountain of all good, he cut him short by asking snappishly, "What he meant?"

"Why, that you ought to go to confession, Peter, and approach the Holy Communion a great deal oftener than you do; indeed I'm afraid you never go at all. Have you been to confession since Father Fitzherbert went away?"

"No, I haven't," was the reply, "and I don't want to be worried about it. I'll go when I think fit, and I'll not go at all if I don't do it of my own accord. So don't bother me about confession. Confession, indeed! I'm sure it's the fine time I have of it with you about the same confession."

Willy had been far from expecting such an answer, and it took him so much by surprise, that he did not speak again till they reached Mrs. Williams's house. They were received by the good lady with all her usual cordiality, and the girls were doubly pleased to see their brothers once more together. But when Peter opened his negotiation (which Willy purposely waited for him to do), the whole scene changed.

Mrs. Williams could scarcely restrain her indignation, and the little girls cried out with one voice :

“Is it leave Mrs. Williams? oh, no, Peter! not for the world, unless she sends us away!” and both looked timidly at their benefactress.

“And that I’ll never do, children,” she said, while the big tear trembled in her eye. “No, if I had only one dollar in the world — and I thank God I have a good round sum by me — I wouldn’t grudge you the half of it. They are not in New York this day I’d let you go to (without you were taken from me by them that had a right to do it), and least of all would I turn you over to the Watkins’s. It is neither to-day nor yesterday that I heard of their doings with respect to Catholic orphans. What do *you* think of this, Willy?”

Willy told her exactly what he had before told his brother, and added : “As for me, Mrs. Williams, I’m just of your notion about these people ; and I’d as soon see my sisters going into a house on fire as into theirs. So if you please, ma’am, you’ll not send them there any more on any account. While they’re under your care I have no fear about them, and that not only from what Father Fitzherbert told us about you, but from all that I have seen of you myself, and heard from the girls.”

“With God’s help,” replied Mrs. Williams, “I endeavor to do for them just what I would for my own children, and what I think their

own worthy mother would approve of, were she living. I pray with them, they go to church with me, and together we approach the Holy Sacraments. I send them daily to a good school — not a proselytizing school, Peter, and take every opportunity of explaining to them their duty to God, the world, and their own souls. Then they are learning the bonnet-making business morning and evening.”

Peter knew not what to say; he was not yet so hardened as to stand up in defence of what his conscience told him was a bad cause, and he did not like, on the other hand, to allow his brother so great a triumph; neither could he bring himself to confess that he had been in the wrong.

“So I’m to tell Mrs. Watkins,” he said, rising suddenly, “that you all refuse her offer — this is her thanks for her kindness to our family.”

“Just tell her what you please,” replied Willy, who was really indignant at his brother’s conduct. “I don’t thank her in the least for her kindness, for I know very well what she’s about. She has got one — more shame and sin for him — and I think she ought to be satisfied. At any rate, she’ll not get either of my sisters hooked, and so you may tell her, if you wish. Come, girls, are you for a walk this evening? May they come, Mrs. Williams?”

"Certainly," was the answer, and in a few minutes the girls stood ready for their walk.

"Are you coming with us, Peter?" inquired his brother, but Peter was far too angry to consent.

"No, indeed, that I am not," he replied sharply; "an' can tell you it will be many a day before I trouble any of you again. It is well for me that I'm not depending on my own for friendship, or anything else." And without deigning to notice his young sisters, who ran after him to the door beseeching him to stay, he hurried from the house. He had not gone far on his way home, when he came full against Wilson and Hamilton, where they stood conversing at the corner of a street.

"Hillo, there, Peter!" cried Wilson, seeing that Burke was passing without seeming to notice them, "is this the way you treat old acquaintances?"

"Oh, Mr. Wilson," said Peter, stopping short, "is this yourself? I'm sure I wasn't thinking of seeing you here. How are you, Mr. Hamilton?"

"First-rate, Peter, first-rate! But you seem to be in a hurry; perhaps you haven't time to stop."

"Oh, for that matter," said Peter, "I can stay as long as I please. I am little less than my own master, particularly on Sundays, for Mr. and Mrs. Watkins are so kind that

they let me do what I please, and go wherever I like."

"Aye," observed Wilson, "I know they have a great regard for you. I have often heard Mr. Watkins say that you are worth gold to him, from your smartness and fidelity."

"Why, I thought you didn't know Mr. Watkins?" said Peter, his face flushed with the joy of hearing this intelligence.

"Of course I do know him, and well too," was the reply; "we belong to the same church; and whenever I *do* go there (which is not very often), I sit in the next pew to his. What an excellent man he is! and I understand that Mrs. Watkins is a most amiable lady, though I have not the pleasure of knowing *her*, except by report."

"Oh!" exclaimed Peter, earnestly, "it would take me a whole day to tell you their kindness. I'm sure if I was their own son they couldn't be much better to me than they are."

"There, you see, Hamilton," said Wilson, turning to his friend, with whom he exchanged a sly wink, "it is just as I told you,—if it wasn't for that one thing they'd adopt him for their own at once. Such was the impression I received from Mr. Watkins's words. What a great pity it is that such an obstacle exists; as with his talents, and the influence of such a friend, there's no knowing what he might come to."

"But surely," remarked Hamilton, "the obstacle to which you allude cannot be irremediable. Peter Burke is not the lad to have his prospects blighted by silly prejudice. Now if it were his brother I couldn't venture to say as much, for really that boy is incurably blind to his own interest, and cannot be moved an inch out of his old way — he is so stupidly ignorant."

Peter listened attentively, as may well be believed, and greedily swallowed every word of this well-managed dialogue, which failed not to produce its fullest effect on his weak mind.

"Well, I'm sure I don't understand what obstacle you mean," he said; "I do all I can to please Mr. Watkins, and if I didn't I'd be very ungrateful. I don't know, then, what he can have against me."

"Oh, it isn't that he has anything against you," said Wilson, quickly, "for the obstacle to which I alluded is, as Watkins says, rather your misfortune than your fault."

"Why, then, what in the world can it be?" cried Peter, fairly at a loss, and full of curiosity, as they expected he would be.

"Really I do not like to tell you," said Wilson. "We are so incessantly annoyed by your brother's bigotry, and the fuss he makes about *the Church*, as he calls it, that one dreads to find you having some, at least, of his 'old-womanish' notions."

"Oh, don't be afraid," said Peter, "don't be afraid! I'll not quarrel with any one about religion. I leave that to Master Willy; for if he chooses to make a fool of himself with his old Irish notions, that's no reason why I shouldn't do better."

Wilson threw a significant glance at Hamilton, and both smiled. "Such being the case," observed Wilson, drawing closer to Peter, as they all three walked along together, "I may venture to tell you that if you were not a Catholic you would be the adopted son of Mr. Watkins, who, having no children of his own, would, of course, make you his heir — lucky fellow that you are! I wouldn't tell you this before Willy, because I know he'd never forgive me, and then he'd be sure to read you a lesson about submission to the Church, and threaten to tell the priest."

"I tell you," said Peter, angrily, "that I don't care a straw about what he says, nor the priests neither, for the matter of that. I've been too long humbugged, and kept down with fear of 'the priests,' so I'll just begin to think and speak for myself; and if Mr. Watkins has only that to complain of, you may tell him for me that I'm not such a fool as he takes me for."

"Bravo, Peter!" cried Wilson; and "I give you joy, Burke!" said Hamilton; and both shook hands with him, one after the other, Peter feeling all the time as if he had shaken

off on the moment a heavy burden, since he had found courage to assert, for the first time, his perfect independence.

Just at this moment they reached the door of the Wesleyan Methodist meeting-house, and Wilson, making a show of going in, said: "What do you think, Peter, if you come in to hear Mr. Donaldson preach? He is one of our crack speakers; and," he added with a laugh, "claims none of that overweening authority that your Popish priests do. Come in, like a good fellow, and hear what he has got to say."

But Peter still hung back, — the last tattered remnant of shame still clung around him, and he blushed deeply on hearing this proposal. "No, not this evening," he said in a hurried manner, "its getting near our supper-hour, and I must go home."

"Well, I'll not press you for the present, but some other time you will come, for I wish you to hear Mr. Donaldson."

"Perhaps I may," said Peter, "but now I must bid you good-evening."

"Good-evening Peter," said the two young men together, and Wilson added: "See that you don't let Willy scold you into your old folly!"

"Never fear — never fear!" was the decided answer. "I'll be my own master for the time to come." And away he went. The two

friends stood looking after him till he was out of hearing, when both laughed heartily.

"How eagerly he snapped at the bait," said Hamilton, "and how adroitly you *did* hook him; one would really think you *were* intimately acquainted with Mr. Watkins, such a face of truth did you put on your story."

"Aye, revenge is a powerful instigator," returned Wilson, with a laugh; "I was all the time thinking of the pain this would cause Willy Burke to feel, and how much he will think himself disgraced by his brother's apostasy. That is all that I have in view. So long as I succeed in mortifying *him*, I don't care a straw whether this wise brother of his is a Papist or a Bible Christian,— he may go to the devil for me, if I can only revenge myself on his saucy brother, for all his tattling and story-carrying."

"Well! now that you have gained your end for this time," said Hamilton, laughing again, "I suppose worthy Mr. Donaldson may preach to whoever is willing to listen; of course we're not going to sit there for an hour, or as long as it may please him to hold forth. Ain't we going over to Williamsburg, as we had proposed doing?"

"Of course we are," was the reply; "I'd see the prosy old fellow far enough before I'd deprive myself of the trip, for the purpose of hearing him rail against Popery. I hate it as much as he does, — of that I'm quite sure;

but he can say nothing new about it, and we're all tired of hearing the same old stories repeated day after day, with only occasional variations, just to make people listen."

"Come along, then, Georgie, lad!" and off went the hopeful pair to Williamsburg.

That same evening, when Willy returned home, after taking tea at Mrs. Williams's, he was surprised to find almost all the young men assembled in the sitting-room, for they were all in the habit of staying out even later on Sunday evenings than any other. "Why, you're all in earlier than usual to-night," said he; "I declare I'm almost the last myself. I hope we're all going to reform," he added jestingly.

"If we ain't," said Wilson, with a sneer, "I know who is. I know of one Papist at least who is already more than half converted from the errors of Popery."

"More shame for him, then, whoever he is," said Willy, quietly, for he began to see that there was a design upon him, and was determined to keep his temper, with God's assistance. "He was never a *good* Catholic, if he's now going to be anything else, and the Church will be well rid of him."

"Not so fast, my good fellow!" said Wilson, in a tone of exultation; "not so fast, if you please, for it's your own brother I mean."

Willy Burke turned pale, and anon red as scarlet. He much feared that what Wilson

said was but too true, yet he would not seem to believe it possible; and, swallowing his emotion as best he could, he said with a laugh — it was a forced laugh, too — “It’s all very well, Mr. Wilson! you can crack your jokes on me as long as you please; so long as it’s only *myself* you attack, I don’t care.”

“But this is no joke, I assure you, Willy!” replied the other; “Hamilton can tell you that as well as I, for we both had it from your brother himself. He told us this very evening that he’s going to become a Protestant, hoping that Mr. Watkins will reward him by making him his heir. He deceives himself, poor fellow, for that gentleman has a nephew in Savannah, who will inherit his fortune, as a matter of right.”

An ashy paleness now spread itself over Willy’s face; and, unable longer to preserve his composure, he would fain leave the room, for he found it difficult to restrain his tears. He arose in silence, and was walking towards the door, repressing his emotion as much as he possibly could, when Wilson’s tittering laugh grated on his ear; and, turning quickly round, he saw that almost every face wore a look of gratified malice. “God forgive you, Mr. Wilson!” he said, with a quivering lip and a tremulous voice, “I don’t know why it is that you all seem to hate me as you do, for I’m sure I never did nor said you wrong. God grant that you don’t draw down punishment on yourselves!”

It was in the midst of a general burst of laughter that Dawson, who had taken no part in the conversation, stepped forward and took Willy by the hand, saying in a kind tone : " I hope, Willy, that you'll not set me down as one of your tormentors, for I do assure you that I'm sorry to see you receive such treatment. Believe me, I can and do sympathize with you, as regards your brother's apostasy — if the news be true, as we are assured it is — for I know and respect your ardent love of religion. Your example goes far to convince me that yours is the true faith, and, with God's help, I will, from this night forward, set about seeking the truth."

Having thus openly expressed his opinion, Dawson turned and bade a cold "good-night" to the other young men, who were struck dumb, it would appear, by this unexpected incident, and he left the room with Willy. The latter almost forgot his own sorrow, in his joy to hear such sentiments from one whom he had so long considered as blindly prejudiced against the Church. Greater still was his surprise, when Dawson, before they separated for the night, asked him to procure for him some books which might instruct him in the doctrines of the Catholic Church ; a request with which he willingly promised to comply, as may well be believed.

CHAPTER X.

THE CRUCIFIX.

IT was a matter of agreeable surprise to Willy, that from that time forward, a marked change for the better was visible in all his companions, Wilson not excepted. He was no longer treated with that contempt which it had so long been his lot to bear, and if a sly sarcasm did once in a while meet his ear, directed either against his religion or himself, it had no longer the bitterness which formerly characterized all such discourse addressed to him in the house. This change was indeed most welcome to poor Willy, coming, as it did, at a time when he was harassed with anxiety about his brother, and he hailed the unwonted civility of his companions with thankfulness and joy. Wilson was now, above all others, the most cheerful, and nothing could exceed his kindness to Willy, whom he jocularly called his *protégé*; "for," said he, "you have actually converted me from the error of my ways, and I owe you so much gratitude that I shall for the future declare myself your friend on all occasions, and defend

you from all possible attacks on the score of religion, although I do not intend to become a Catholic—just yet.”

Willy Burke smiled, and professed himself very grateful for the good intentions of his new friend, although he could not but find the change rather sudden. “I can’t understand it at all,” would he say to himself; “but then what good would it do him to make a show of being my friend? and only his heart is entirely changed, he surely wouldn’t treat me so differently from what he did before.”

Things had gone on in this way for at least two weeks. Dawson had gone through several small works on Catholic Doctrine, which Willy had borrowed from Father O’Hara, and already the light of divine truth was beginning to shine on his mind, so long darkened by prejudice, and overshadowed by the clouds of error. The young man himself talked little to the others of the gradual change his mind was undergoing, for he knew them better than Willy did, and he evidently placed but little confidence in their present show of liberality.

One evening Willy had asked permission of Mr. Talbot to go see after his brother, and was just returned, saddened and disappointed, not having been able to see Peter, when he was told that Mr. Weimar and Mr. Talbot were both in the sitting-room, waiting for his return. It was very near the usual supper-hour, and it was a strange time for the gentle-

men to come ; besides, Mr. Weimar had never been to the house since Willy Burke had been its inmate. And then the idea of their waiting for him threw him into a tremor which almost deprived him of the power of motion.

"Waiting to see me!" he repeated, in a faint voice, "why, what do they want with me at this hour?"

"I don't know, I'm sure!" was the reply of Hamilton, for it was he who opened the door, "but they do seem pretty anxious for your coming."

"Well, then, I'll go, in God's name!" said Willy; and opening the door, he entered the sitting-room. His first look was at Mr. Talbot, and he was shocked to see that gentleman wear a sternness of aspect all unusual with him. Mr. Weimar was pacing the room to and fro with a restless air, but his countenance, always fixed and rigid, gave no indication of what was passing in his mind. All the young men were present, and, as Willy glanced around, he fancied that every face wore a sort of incipient sneer. Dawson alone looked kindly on him, but even he spoke not a word. There was evidently something unusual going forward, and Willy felt chilled, though he knew not why. Mr. Weimar was the first to speak, and his tones were harsh—even harsher than their wont.

"You keep us too long waiting," he said, "but you not tink to find us here, eh?"

"No, indeed, Mr. Weimar," answered Willy, "I didn't expect to see either you or Mr. Talbot here."

"You guess why we come, eh? What you tink brought us?"

"Well, I don't know, sir," said Willy, and his voice trembled slightly, "I hope there's nothing wrong?"

"Yes, dere is someting wrong, sir!" said Weimar, mimicking his tone, "and I tink you know it, too. What you do with dat parcel Mr. Talbot give you to-day for me at de office-door — where you put it, eh?"

"I put it on your desk, sir," said Willy; and the color left his cheek, for he began to fear that his misgivings were too well founded.

"On my desk, eh? I see no parcel dere. Where was I when you put it on my desk?" asked Weimar, with increasing sternness in his voice.

"You were gone to dinner, sir. Mr. Talbot knew that, too, and he told me to lay it where I did, so that you'd see it the first thing when you came in. I put it in the big book, sir, that was lying open on the desk."

"And the big book ate it up, eh? Now, I much 'fraid dat you be one deceitful young rogue, Burke. Did any one see you put dat parcel — I s'pose you know very well dat it was money — on my desk? Was any one in de office?"

"No, sir," said Willy, and his thick, husky

voice bespoke emotion, "there was no one in the office at the time, for Mr. Talbot gave me the key to open it. But sure, sir, the parcel can't be lost?"

"I much fear it is, Willy," said Mr. Talbot, speaking for the first time, "that is, unless you can find it for us, and it contained a large sum of money."

"He know dat very well, de young rascal," interrupted Weimar, angrily; "dere is no use asking more questions — he take de money — I see dat plain enough. Now, if you don't give up dat money dat you pilfer, I'll send dis very minute for de police and den you go to prison." This threat was made with a vehemence which would have seemed foreign to the German's disposition, and he even shook his hand menacingly at Willy, but the latter scarcely heeded it. Turning to Mr. Talbot, who still sat silent and stern, with his arm resting on the table, he said:

"And do *you* believe this, Mr. Talbot? — do *you* suspect me of stealing away this parcel? Money I didn't know it was, until you told me just now what was in it."

"How can I believe you innocent, Willy?" and Mr. Talbot heaved a deep-drawn sigh as he spoke. "Here, I gave you this parcel (with the key of the office, knowing that Mr. Weimar was not there), and directed you to place it on the writing-desk. You brought me back the key in a few moments, and told me

you had done as I ordered, but when Mr. Weimar with his own key opened the office-door and went in, a short time after, the parcel was not there; and then your asking permission to go out this evening on pretence of seeing your brother — altogether the matter wears a bad aspect. Would that I *could* believe you guiltless of this crime, for I'm sorry, heartily sorry to find you — you, Willy Burke — so far different from what you seemed to be."

"Well, Mr. Talbot," said Willy Burke, in a tone where reproach was blent with deep sorrow, "I thought *you'd* be the last to believe me guilty — not because I'm any better than another — for God knows I am not — but because you know very well that I try all I can to do and say what religion teaches. I could bear all — all — they might send me to prison and punish me any way they like — though the Lord knows I'm as innocent of this crime as the child unborn — so long as you didn't believe me guilty; but for *you* — *you*, Mr. Talbot, that was more like a father than a master to me — for you to suspect me of such a deed as this, oh, indeed, sir, it goes to my very heart!" And the big tears trickled unheeded from his eyes. Yes, it was evident that the heaviest blow of all was Mr. Talbot's seeming readiness to believe him guilty. That gentleman himself was even visibly touched by this apparently sincere sorrow, but still facts were

so strong against Willy, that he dared not listen to the promptings of his generous heart.

"I repeat," said he, "that I am truly sorry that suspicion should rest on you, and doubly sorry shall I be if you are found to deserve it. But what say these young men?" he added, turning to some of the others. "Have any of you seen or heard anything this day that might throw light on this unfortunate occurrence?"

"Ay," said Weimar, "can any one give de—de—what you call dat?—testimony against dis boy, for he goes to prison dis very night, so sure as I live."

Being thus addressed, one of the lads, Henry Davis, stepped forward and said, though with well-feigned reluctance, that he had seen Willy Burke put a small parcel in his pocket before he left the warehouse, though he could not see what it contained.

"Was that the one you saw, Henry?" asked Dawson, coming suddenly forward, and taking a small parcel from his pocket.

"I can't say; it might have been."

"Because Willy Burke gave me this, just before he went out, when I met him at the door, and the gentlemen can see for themselves what it contains." He opened it, and laid on the table a small book: it was "The Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine." "This is the parcel, Henry, that you saw Willy Burke put in his pocket, for he had laid it aside on a shelf until it was time to leave the warehouse. And,

gentlemen," he added, turning respectfully to the merchants, "notwithstanding the apparent difficulty in believing him innocent, I do venture to say that in my opinion the poor lad is innocent of the crime laid to his charge. I solemnly declare that I could scarcely be brought to believe him guilty of even a much more trifling misdemeanor. And if I had ten thousand dollars I would stake it on his innocence being established."

"God reward you, Mr. Dawson!" exclaimed Willy Burke, "and I hope you'll never want a friend in your hour of need."

"Well, George," said Mr. Talbot, addressing Wilson, "what have you got to say in this matter, for I see you have been for some time watching your opportunity to speak?"

All eyes were now turned on Wilson, who came slowly forward, as though the task before him was excessively repugnant to his feelings. "Gentlemen," said he, "I have been some years in your employment, and have found you uniformly generous as well as just; it would ill become me, therefore, to remain silent when I am conscious that I have it in my power to do you a service. Some people may be induced through a false pity"—here he glanced at Dawson—"or some other less excusable motive, to connive at guilt, and even attempt to screen it from punishment; but this I cannot do, and I therefore tell you—though I regret the necessity which compels me so to do—

that Willy Burke is a far different character from what you suppose him to be, and I have not the least doubt but that he really took this money, whatever he may have done with it. Hamilton, will you tell the gentlemen what you saw him do to-day?"

Hamilton then stated that he had chanced to be doing something in a kind of recess which was nearly opposite the office door, when he saw Willy Burke enter and close it after him. In a few minutes he came out, and after having locked the door, he distinctly saw him put his hand into the breast-pocket of his coat, as though to ascertain the safety of something, and then, buttoning his coat closely, he walked quickly away. "Of course," said Hamilton, "I thought no more about the circumstance till I heard of the missing parcel, when it occurred to me at once."

"Now I declare in the presence of God," said Willy, his cheeks flushed with honest indignation, "and before all the saints in heaven, that I do not remember to have done as Mr. Hamilton says I did. I neither put my hand in my bosom, nor buttoned up my coat, — and that's as true as that I'm standing here!"

Mrs. Malcolm was now called in, and was asked whether Willy Burke had gone up to his room after coming from the warehouse, before he went out. The housekeeper was not a little surprised at the question, and the serious manner in which it was put, but she answered at

once that he had, -- he just went up for a few minutes, and then went out in a hurry, saying that he would be back by the time supper was ready, if he possibly could.

"Dere now, Talbot," said Weimar, exultingly, "what you say to dat, eh?"

"I say," replied Talbot, "that we had better go at once and search his room; since he denies having taken the money, we must proceed with such steps as may lead to its discovery. You will please light us up stairs, Mrs. Malcolm, to Willy Burke's room."

"Certainly, sir!" said the housekeeper, and forthwith she fetched a lamp.

"But will you just let me say one word, gentlemen?" Mr. Talbot nodded assent, and Weimar stopped to listen, his foot resting on the first step of the stairs.

"Now I understand that you're suspecting this puir laddie, Burke, of purloining something, and you may baith tak' an' auld woman's word for it, that he never did ony sic like thing. Na, na, -- Willy Burke fears God, and serves him, too, with all his heart; and sic like folks are never found breaking his commandments. I tell you -- and you'll find my words true -- that Willy Burke is innocent, let who may be guilty!"

"I should be happy, indeed, Mrs. Malcolm, to find it so!" said Mr. Talbot, as he motioned to Mr. Weimar to go on, "but unfortunately there is strong proof against him."

He then called to Willy and a few of the other young men to go up with him and Mr. Weimar; while Mrs. Malcolm brought up the rear, muttering, as she went:

"I dinna care a button for their proof, — I'll never believe him guilty, unless I saw it with my ain eyes!"

"And probably you may see it with your own eyes, Mrs. Malcolm;" said Wilson, tauntingly, as he walked just before her. "What will you say then to your favorite?"

"Why just this," returned the housekeeper, snappishly, "that the puir laddie has enemies bad enough to do anything they can to blacken him, and if truth maun out, Mr. Georgie Wilson! I'd sooner suspect your ainself, for I well believe you'd do amaist ony thing to injure him, though he never injured you."

"Have a care what you say, Mrs. Malcolm," said Wilson, almost aloud, forgetting all caution in his anger, and turning to her with a flushed cheek and a menacing air; "I'd advise you to keep a civil tongue in your head, or you may chance to find —"

"What all dis about?" cried Weimar, from the top of the stairs; "who make dat noise der below?"

"Mrs. Malcolm and myself were just speaking of some little matter belonging to the house, sir," said Wilson quickly, and he looked significantly at the housekeeper, but the latter was in no humor to heed the signal, and she

said in a still louder voice, as she reached the last step, and stood beside Mr. Weimar, where he awaited them :

“ You need na be winkin’ or blinkin’ at me, Mr. Wilson. I tell you over and over again that I’d sooner suspect any one of you than him ; an’ its my firm conviction t’at it will all come out to be a vile plot. Hear you that, now ? ”

“ Hush, hush, Mrs. Malcolm ! ” interposed Mr. Talbot, soothingly ; “ let us, if possible, probe the matter to the bottom, so that the truth may appear — but till then we had better say as little as possible. ”

Just then they all entered Willy Burke’s room, and Mr. Weimar himself set about making the proposed search. In the first place he asked Willy for the key of his little trunk, which was cheerfully given. The trunk was searched, but nothing was seen that could excite the least suspicion. The bed was next examined, but with the same success ; and, in short, every spot within the chamber, where the smallest parcel could be concealed, underwent the strictest examination, Mr. Weimar, as he proceeded, throwing many an angry look at Willy, where he stood leaning against the wall. It was evident that the German had hoped much from this search, for at every fresh disappointment he grumbled out : “ What de deevil ! de money not here — de young robber make away wid it when he go out dat time. ”

All this time Willy had not spoken a word, nor manifested the slightest anxiety, and when the fruitless investigation of the room was concluded, Mr. Weimar said to him: "You take dis matter very cool — you not the least frightened, eh? You tink, I s'pose, dat when we not find de money here, you all right; but we see dat; we make you confess dis great robbery, dat we will; you go to jail dis very hour."

"Well sir," said Willy, in a firm but respectful tone, "I can only tell you again that I am innocent; and as you have so much reason to suspect me, I suppose I have nothing to expect but what you threaten me with. It's hard, sir, very hard that I must be sent to jail, — not that I'd complain on my own account, but for the disgrace it is to the good father and mother that reared me, and to the holy religion I profess; but then if it's the will of God I must submit without a murmur, an' I don't blame you, gentlemen, if you do put me in prison, for I know that as everything stands now, you can't but think me guilty. But Mr. Weimar, you're under a mistake, sir, if you think that I'm grieved and troubled about this; I am, indeed, sir, both sorry and ashamed that such a thing should even be laid to the charge of my father's son; but I'm not a bit afraid on my own account, for I know that God will bring the truth to light in his own good time,

and till he does, I'm content to be treated as if I was guilty."

"But," said Mr. Talbot, who could not help receiving a favorable impression from Willy's words and manners, "but since you so strenuously declare yourself innocent, have you no suspicion of the real offender?"

"God forbid, Mr. Talbot," was the reply, "that I'd suspect any one of committing such a crime, much less mention any name. Oh! no, sir, it's bad enough for one to be set down as guilty, and not to be bringing in another. All I have to say is, that I put the parcel where you told me, sir, on Mr. Weimar's desk, and then locked the door after me and brought you back the key. I neither saw nor heard any one in or about the office; and indeed I don't know how any one could get in to take it away before Mr. Weimar came back, for the other door of the office, the one leading from the warehouses, is almost always locked."

"Well, this is really unaccountable!" observed Mr. Talbot to his partner. "Here is this lad, in the simplicity of his heart, lessening the chance of shifting suspicion from himself, by assuring us that he neither saw nor heard any one about the office, and even that the inner door was locked,—at least he thought so. Surely this does not look like guilt?"

Weimar was about to answer, and his looks denoted impatience, when suddenly he approached Willy, and said, "What is dat ting

dat make a bulk dere in your breast? Open your coat, dere's some ting in dat pocket; let us see what it is? Ha, ha! de secret will come out now, I tink."

Every eye was now turned on Willy's bosom, where sure enough there was a very perceptible protuberance, as if of some parcel thrust into the breast-pocket of his coat. Even Mrs. Malcolm trembled, and the young men could scarcely refrain from laughing out, in the glee of exultation. Mr. Talbot said nothing, but a slight flush was on his cheek as he watched the changing countenance of the lad, and waited to see what he really dreaded,—the confirmation of his suspicions. But Willy showed no sign of either fear or confusion.

"Here, Mr. Weimar," he said, hastily unbuttoning the round jacket which he wore, "here, sir, you can search my pockets, aye, every one of them! There *is* something in this breast-pocket, sir, but you can take it out yourself, and then you'll see what it is." Weimar thrust in his hand and drew forth, not the missing parcel, but a small ebony crucifix, worn and old, as though it might have belonged to a by-gone age.

"Why, vat de deevil is dis?" cried Weimar, as he held the crucifix aloft, amid the suppressed tittering of the young men, with the single exception of Dawson; "vat dis ting dat he carry in his pocket? Oh, dis some

Papist idol, I forgot the name. Vat you call it, eh, Talbot?"

"That is a crucifix," replied Talbot, calmly; "but you mistake, my friend, in calling it an idol; it is merely a representation of our Lord's passion and death."

"Yes, yes!" said the other, quickly, "but vat's de use, eh? Vat good dis, vat you call it, dis presentation, eh?"

"Representation," said Talbot again.

"Aye, dat's a long word! vell, vat good in dis ting? Why he carry it in his pocket?"

"Really, I do not know," rejoined Talbot. "The first part of your question I could easily answer, but why Willy Burke carries it about so I cannot tell you, for it is by no means usual with us Catholics to have crucifixes of that size upon our person. Answer Mr. Weimar's question, Willy," he added; and his voice had almost all its usual softness, for he became more and more convinced that Willy had been wronged.

"Well, sir," said Willy, "I just put it in my pocket when I was going to see my brother this evening, and, to tell you the truth, it was for it I came into the house after I left the warehouse. I don't carry it with me any other time, for it hangs on that nail at the head of my bed."

"And vat you bring it out dis evening for?"

"I wanted to show it to my brother, sir;" and for the first time Willy Burke hung his

head, while his very forehead assumed a crimson hue.

"Your broder, he never see it before, de old ting, vat you call 'presentation,' eh? Vat you show it to him for, tell me dat?"

"Mr. Talbot," said poor Willy, turning in his distress to that gentleman, and his eyes filled with tears, "Mr. Talbot, I'd rather, if you please, sir, that Mr. Weimar wouldn't put this question to me, if you'd be good enough to ask him."

"Nay," said Mr. Talbot, "you had better answer the question; I myself am desirous to hear your reason for bringing the crucifix to your brother, for I see there is something unusual in the case."

"Well, sir," and Willy spoke with difficulty, for tears were choking him, "poor Peter, I'm afraid, is in a bad way this time back, and if what I heard the other evening be true, his soul is in great danger of being lost, so as I had tried every way that I could think of to make him begin a new life, but all to no purpose, I just took it into my head that maybe the sight of this crucifix might have some effect on his mind,—if it wouldn't I might give him up for lost." Here Willy stopped, for he could not speak another word, but Mr. Talbot quickly caught him up:

"Alas!" sighed Talbot, as though thinking aloud, "when the heart is hardened by a course of sin, or steeled by the prejudice of

error, how little is it touched by the sight of any religious symbol. To such, a crucified Saviour is anything but dear or precious, since their daily and hourly life, as they cannot but feel, is a continual insult offered to him — the Man-God."

"Yes, but, Mr. Talbot," said Willy, "if this was any other crucifix but the one it is, I wouldn't have thought of such a thing, but it's an old family-piece, sir, and every one of our family that died since he or I remembers, this very crucifix was put in their hands when they were leaving this world. Above all, sir"—here the poor fellow's voice sank almost to a whisper—"above all, Mr. Talbot, we both saw it put in my father's hand, and in my mother's, when they were dying, and laid on their bosoms when they were dead, and that's the reason why I thought that if the sight of it would not soften his heart, and make him love our holy religion, nothing in this world would. But the worst of it was, sir, that I didn't see Peter at all; he wasn't with-in, or at least they told me so."

"Dat one great pity," said Weimar, bursting into a kind of cackling laugh peculiar to himself, and forgetting his money and his anger for the moment. "Your broder have great loss, eh? Now, you Papists are all fools,—fools, every one. And so you tink your piece of black wood, dat cross, could change your broder, and make him good Cat'lic, eh? Dat good fun!"

His laugh was echoed by Wilson and Hamilton and their friends, while Dawson looked reprovingly at them. Mrs. Malcolm could no longer restrain her indignation; wiping away with her white apron the tears which Willy's simple explanation had called forth, she said aloud, and with unfeigned anger:

"You graceless pack o' ne'er do weels! how daur you laugh at the puir laddie sae? When you hae na the grace to believe as he does, ye should at least hae the manners not to laugh at him for having the fear of God and the love of religion in his heart."

"You forget, good Mrs. Malcolm," said Weimar, angrily, "dat your pious laddie has stolen our money; but we'll send him vere he deserves to go, and let him see if his cross — dat piece of black wood dere — vill take him out. Go off some one for de police."

In vain did Mrs. Malcolm beg, even with tears, that the matter might be examined farther before such a decisive step was taken, and even Mr. Talbot suggested that it might be postponed till the following day. No, no! Weimar was determined, and would not hear a word.

"Well, gentlemen," said Mrs. Malcolm, "since I find that you — at least Mr. Weimar — is determined to push it as far as he can against this puir fatherless and motherless bairn, I canna refrain from sayin' that ye're a-goin' to commit a grievous sin; he's no more

guilty than I am, I see that plainly ; and something tells me that the culprit is here present."

Every one stared at her, and Mr. Weimar asked her what she meant. She made him no reply, for her eyes had been fixed on Wilson's face with a look of intense scrutiny, and when she saw him shrink before her, and his whole face become red as scarlet, she cried out aloud, pointing to him with her finger : " Look there, Mr. Weimar ! look there, Mr. Talbot ! I'd wager my best new gown that *there's* guilt, for it's an auld saying that ' a guilty conscience needs no accuser.' Look at *him*, I say, and then look at Willy Burke. Do you see any signs o' confusion or shame about *him* ? Na, na ! for he's innocent ; but, Georgie Wilson, I say, before God and man, an' I care na wha hears it, that you took away that parcel to have the blame fall on Willy Burke."

" It's a lie, — a black, malicious lie, you old Papist hag ! " cried Wilson, turning pale with anger. " You need not try to screen the young rascal, for the gallows will have its due. How dare you accuse *me* of any such thing. I told you a little while ago, and I tell you again, to beware how you talk to me in such a way." And he shook his clenched fist at the old woman, who only smiled at his impotent anger.

Suddenly Mr. Talbot, who had been a close though silent observer of this last episode, was seen to beckon Mr. Weimar apart. After

a few words spoken together, they came forward, and Weimar said in an authoritative tone :

“Mrs. Malcolm, you show us to Mr. Wilson’s room. Wilson, you give me de key of your trunk.”

“I haven’t it about me, sir,” was the confused reply.

“Find it for me, and dat quickly too!”

“Well, really, Mr. Weimar,” said Wilson, with increasing embarrassment, “I must protest against my trunk being examined. I do not recognize your right to take such a liberty ; and besides, I scarcely know where to look for the key.”

“Den we’ll break de lock, dat’s all. Come all of you to Mr. Wilson’s room!”

“Oh, then,” said Wilson, forcing a laugh, and making a violent effort to appear gay, though still his uneasiness and embarrassment were distinctly visible, “oh, then, there would be no great use in carrying the joke farther, for if I went so far with it as to let you find the money in my trunk, I might have some trouble in persuading you that it *was* a joke. Here is the key, Mr. Weimar. Will you go yourself, sir, for the parcel, or shall I?”

“So, then, it was you who took it, Wilson?” said Mr. Talbot, an indescribable expression of satisfaction lighting up his fine intellectual features. “And yet you would have suffered this poor boy to be arrested and

thrown into prison had it not been for Mrs. Malcolm's keen Scotch penetration. What a fearful aggravation of your own crime ! ”

“ You have no right to conclude, sir, that I would have let it go so far as that,” said Wilson in a confident tone ; “ I was just beginning to think that it was time to acknowledge the truth, when worthy Mrs. Malcolm deprived me of the opportunity. However, it is all the same.”

“ An' what made you be sae sair fash'd at my putting in a word,” said the housekeeper, pointedly, “ gin it was only a joke you were makin'. Ah, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Wilson, truth will out ! You thought to work your revenge on Willy Burke (for God forbid that I'd say you intended to keep the money), but you forgot that he *remembers his Creator in the days of his youth*, and that the great and good Master, whom he serves, never forgets his ain, nor gives them up to the designs of the wicked.”

Mr. Weimar here broke in impatiently : “ Before we go any farder, go you, Wilson, bring the money, dat de first ting.” While he was gone, Mr. Talbot took the opportunity to congratulate Willy Burke on his innocence, assuring him that the loss of the money itself had not grieved him so much as his supposed guilt. Even Mr. Weimar, in his own curt style, expressed his sorrow for having been induced to treat him so harshly.

“You didn’t treat me harshly, Mr. Weimar,” said Willy, “beggin’ your pardon, sir, for you couldn’t but think me guilty, an’ if I was, I’d deserve the very worst of treatment. But I knew all along that God wouldn’t desert me when I most wanted his help, so I waited as patiently as I could to see what would turn up. But I’m sure I never thought that any of the young men had taken the money, for it seemed to me that it must have fallen on the floor and got into some dark corner, where it was out of sight. Thanks be to God that it has turned up, at any rate!”

“Yes,” said Mr. Talbot, “but it would appear that this unhappy young man, whether he really intended to keep the money or not, was actuated by an unholy desire of revenge. Mrs. Malcolm has just now been telling me how this Wilson and the others have been incessantly mocking and reviling you on account of your religion, and also the conversation (for one of the young men, she says, related it to her) which excited Wilson’s hatred so strongly. Now who could have believed him capable of such depravity?”

“Oh, as to that, sir,” said Willy, “I suppose he only meant this as a joke, and as to all that’s passed, why it wasn’t worth speaking of. When youngsters like us get together, many a thing we’ll be talkin’ about that isn’t worth repeatin’, an’ we forget it all, or the most of it, just as soon as it is passed.”

"God bless you, laddie, God bless you!" was Mrs. Malcolm's fervent exclamation, "for, sure an' certain, you are one o' his ain faithful children, that you are!" Mr. Talbot glanced at his partner, and was pleased to see that the old man's countenance wore a softened and even kind expression as he looked at Willy, on whose sunny features not a cloud was now visible.

Wilson just then entered the room and handed the parcel to Mr. Weimar with another attempt at a laugh, though his cheek was dyed crimson. "There it is, sir," he said, and his voice trembled slightly, "I hope you'll forgive me for this trick, as the money hasn't been but a few hours in my possession, and —" What he further intended to say was cut short by Weimar, who, snatching the parcel from his hand, exclaimed angrily:

"You be one great rascal, dat what I say, and I tink you deserve to be sent to de State's Prison. I'm very sorry dat I can't have you taken up, for I'd give de half of all dis money to see you lodged dere; and dese two lads — Hamilton and Davis — dey help you up wit your wicked plans; dey walk off, too, as well as you —"

"Why, surely, Mr. Weimar," said Hamilton, "you wouldn't think of punishing us so severely merely for helping Mr. Wilson to carry on his frolic? I am quite sure that *we* had not the slightest intention of really in-

juring Willy Burke any more than Wilson had of retaining your money. It was all a joke, sir, indeed it was. I see now that we should not have taken such a liberty when your property was in question, but when no serious harm was done, or, in fact, intended, it is rather hard that we should lose our situations for a harmless trick."

"Yes, you call it harmless, do you? but I call it wicked, vile plot. You all hate dis boy Burke, because he Papist; you tink he too much favor here, den you put your heads together and make a plan to ruin him. I don't say dat Wilson meant to take dat money for himself, but dat no excuse; you all bad, very bad, very wicked, and you march, all three of you. You go and make jokes like dis some oder place."

Mr. Talbot inquired how Wilson had got into the office, and was answered: "By means of the inner door; which," said he, "was not locked, as you supposed."

"Well," said Weimar, motioning with his hand for all to leave the room, "de night is passing away; it is time to put off every business for de morrow, and, Wilson, do you hear? — you dat can make such fine joke — you, Hamilton, and Davis must all come to my office to-morrow forenoon. I'll pay you up, and den you go about your business."

When they had all reached the sitting-room below, Wilson said with a sneer: "I hope, Mr.

Weimar, as you propose dismissing us from your employment chiefly because we do not carry crucifixes about in our pockets, that you'll do something handsome for this pious youth who practises all sorts of Popish superstitions." Amazed at his impudence, all the other young men looked anxiously to see its effect on Mr. Weimar particularly, whose choleric temper was well known to them all. To their surprise he was perfectly cool, though the tremor of his lip denoted strong emotion. Rising from his seat, he assumed an air of dignity not at all usual with him, and ordered Wilson to quit the room instantly; he would even have insisted on his leaving the house, but Mr. Talbot persuaded him to let him remain till the morrow.

"Come, lads," said Wilson, addressing his two friends, "let us go up stairs. Why do you stand there, looking as though you could cry? If you had a particle of spirit, you wouldn't let that hypocritical Burke see you so dejected; you know very well how he'll triumph over us. Come along!" But they whom he addressed were not at all disposed to take his advice, being still in hopes of being forgiven, so they both refused to go with him, saying that they had been but too long under his guidance. A sneering laugh was Wilson's reply; but as he passed Willy Burke, on his way out, he said aloud: "I've missed my aim this time, but all is not lost, — your brother is

in our hands, and, if we don't make him a good sound Protestant, my name is not George Wilson. Remember!" and he raised his finger with a warning gesture as he left the room.

Willy Burke was far from hearing this threat without emotion, as his varying color truly told, but yet it did not prevent him from doing what he thought his duty. Going, then, up to Mr. Weimar and Mr. Talbot, where they stood together near the fireplace, he said in a low voice: "Might I venture, gentlemen, to ask you a favor, now that you know that I'm not guilty of that crime?"

"Yes, ask what you please, Willy," said Mr. Talbot, kindly taking his hand. "I know very well that you will make no unreasonable request."

"Well, sir, if you and Mr. Weimar wouldn't think it too great a liberty for me to take, I'd ask you to forgive Mr. Wilson and the other young men. They're all longer in the place than I am, and as you never found any of them dishonest before now, it is plain that it was only meant for a joke. And then it would be hard if they'd be sent away on my account, that's only a stranger, after all. That's what I wanted to say, gentlemen, but I didn't like to come up to speak to you before Mr. Wilson."

"Now Weimar," said Talbot, without replying to Willy, "you heard what Wilson said to him as he left the room,—so that you have before you all his conduct, and yet you hear

him sue for pardon for that persevering foe. What think you now?" and he added, in a lower voice, "see if this be not the effect of his religious principles?"

Weimar, without any direct reply, turned at once to Willy, and affecting a sternness which was far from his real feeling at the moment, he said rather sharply: "You not in earnest, — you only make believe dat you forgive him. Dat's not natural, dat you'd be asking us to pardon him, and he so black against you, — I don't tink dat's possible! what you say, boy? — I no like people dat make b'lieve — better say nothing about it!"

"Well, sir," said Willy, "to tell you the truth, I did find it hard to bring myself to do it, for it *is* unnatural — I know that. I must own that I was angry with Mr. Wilson when I found out what he had done, and it's only there a little while ago that I got the better of my anger. But I did, sir, thanks be to God, I *did* get the better of it, and I can solemnly assure you that I never asked any favor with more sincerity than I ask you and Mr. Talbot to overlook these young men's fault, and keep them in their situations."

"But how did you get the better of your anger, as you say yourself?" persisted Weimar, while Mr. Talbot, Mrs. Malcolm, and even Mr. Dawson looked eagerly for the answer.

"Well, sir, I'll just tell you *that*. When I felt the passion strong upon me, and couldn't

even bear to look at Mr. Wilson in the room above, I put my hand in my pocket for my handkerchief, and it came right on the crucifix that I had put back into my pocket to hide it from any more insult."

"And what den,—what did de crucifix do, eh?—it make you forgive Wilson, I s'pose?"

"It did, sir," said Willy, heedless of the tone in which the other spoke; "that is, it reminded me in a minute of all that our blessed Saviour suffered from wicked men, and how he died on the cross to save all mankind—if it isn't their own fault—even the very Jews that put him to death; then I remembered how he prayed for them with his last breath, and I saw at once what a grievous sin it was for me to be so angry with Mr. Wilson for such a trifling cause, so I begged that Jesus Christ would grant me the grace to forgive him, and very soon I felt my heart softened and my anger dying away, and I knew that God had indeed heard my prayer. That's the truth, sir, whether you believe it or not!"

"I do; I do b'lieve you, and since dat's de way you Cat'lies use de crucifix, to make tink of Christ's Passion, and den forgive deir enemies, I'll never make mock of it any more. Dere now, we say no more dis night, but you just go on the same, Willy Burke, don't mind when some one laughs at you as I did while ago; you go to church, and say your prayers,

and study de crucifix, — I never tell you any more not to do dem tings."

"And the priests, Mr. Weimar?" asked Talbot, with sly emphasis. "Is he still to keep clear of them, as I once heard you tell him?"

"Ah! dat's de point — dat's de worst of it; you Popish people so much afraid of de priests you can't do nothing widout deir leave. Let me alone about de priests."

"And yet you cannot pretend to say," observed Talbot, unwilling to give up the point so easily, "that Willy Burke asked permission of the priest to forgive Wilson, and sue for favor for him."

"I know dat, I know dat, but what for you say so?"

"Why simply this," replied Talbot, "that whatever you admire and approve of in this young lad's conduct is the teaching of the priests reduced to practice, and *that* because they are the expounders of the Divine law, and guide their people according to its precepts. Well, well would it be for society — even civil society — were all who profess the Catholic faith to follow the advice and practise the lessons they receive from their priests as faithfully as does this humble youth. Perhaps it is not well for me to speak so before you, Willy," he added, addressing the latter, "nor would I venture to do so, but that I believe you too firmly grounded in the

maxims of true piety to be puffed up or elated by human praise."

"Oh no, sir," said Willy, modestly, "I hope God will never let me forget myself so far as to become proud; but now there's no great danger, sir, for I understand very well that it's to our holy religion the merit goes, and not to me."

"Well, well," said Weimar, "let us go now. Come, Talbot, we'll talk of dis anoder time, for I do begin to tink dat some religion is good after all."

"And so think I," said Dawson, approaching Willy as the gentlemen left the room, and he shook his hand warmly. "I, too, am convinced that religion is even necessary for the good of society, and this night has confirmed me in the opinion that the Catholic religion is the best of all, — in fact the only one that can control the heart and bend the stubborn will of man."

"Well," said Willy Burke, as they ascended the stairs together, "I can't tell you how glad I am to hear you say so; it's such a glorious thing to see a soul coming back from the way of error into the right road — the road that leads to heaven. May God grant you the grace to persevere to the end!"

"I hope you'll not forget me in your prayers then," said Dawson.

"No, no," replied Willy, with unaffected fervor, "for there's nothing more delightful to

all true Catholics than to see them that's outside the Church comin' in, where they know they'll find a safe shelter. You may be sure I'll pray for you!" They then bade each other good-night, and each went his way to his room.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE REVENGE.

ON the following morning Wilson was paid off and dismissed, with a friendly admonition from Mr. Talbot, warning him of the danger of giving way to his passions, and reminding him how the disgraceful scene of the night before, and the consequent loss of his situation, were but the sequel of that memorable conversation wherein he had so wantonly (though perhaps without any great degree of malice) attacked Willy Burke, on the score of his religion. "Revenge," said Mr. Talbot, "is at all times an unholy feeling, and if indulged, will often be found to recoil on the head of him who worked it for another. Thus you promised to be revenged on Burke merely because he put a sudden stop to your ridicule of his religion and its priests. Well, you have done your utmost,—you have made a desperate effort to fulfil your vow, and here it is yourself who suffer. You sought to blacken and defame that virtuous lad, and the result of your machinations has been to establish his character on a firmer basis than ever, so that

our opinion of him cannot be again changed, while you are dismissed from a situation which you had filled for two years before we knew *him*, and go forth suspected, so that nothing could induce us to recommend you to any office of trust. Take my word for it, Wilson, that the safest road, even in a worldly point of view, is the way of God's commandments. The way of sin and error will never bring you to true happiness, even limiting the expression to the happiness of this life."

"At any rate," was the answer, "I don't want to be schooled so. I guess I'm quite able to take care of myself, and to judge for myself too. I, at least, Mr. Talbot, will never submit my judgment to that of any other; I leave that to Papists, who 'hear the Church.' As for losing my situation, I don't care a straw about it — the loss ain't much."

Mr. Talbot only smiled — it was a smile of pity — but Mr. Weimar raised his head from the desk where he had been writing, and angrily ordered him to quit the place instantly.

"If you speak anoder word here," he said sternly, "I'll have de porters kick you out. How dare you speak so to Mr. Talbot, after we let you off so easy, widout making everybody know what great scoundrel you are? Go off, I say, or you'll not be glad for staying."

"I will go, old ginger-face," said Wilson, his cheek pale with the intensity of his passion,

“but be sure that I'll cherish the remembrance of your parting words.”

At the special request of Mr. Talbot, the other two lads were kept, as their guilt had been much less than that of Wilson, on whose instigation they had solely acted. Willy Burke was forthwith placed in the situation left vacant by Wilson's departure, and so far all went well.

Next evening Willy went to see his sisters, and gave Mrs. Williams an account of what had happened on the preceding day, concealing, however, the name of the delinquent. The little girls cried bitterly when they heard of the sore trial their brother had undergone, while Mrs. Williams could only raise her hands and eyes towards heaven in silent thankfulness, for her heart was full of joy and gratitude on hearing the beautiful morality of the religion she loved so fully vindicated and so triumphantly proved. Willy had studiously avoided taking any merit to himself, giving to God, as a Christian should, all the merit and all the praise; yet Mrs. Williams extended her hand to him when he had concluded, and said, while the glow of genuine feeling lit up her faded cheek:

“May the Lord bless you, my child — and bless you he will — for you make it your chief care to do his holy will, as in duty bound. Go on as you are going, and be assured that you will pass unscathed through the fire of this

world's temptations and allurements — they cannot harm those who are strong in faith and humble in heart."

"Ah, but, Mrs. Williams," said Willy, with a sudden change of manner, "what is to become of poor unfortunate Peter? I'm afraid what I heard is too true, for he hinted it to me plainly enough after we left here on that Sunday evening when we last called to see you. I wish," he added with a sigh, "that Father Fitzherbert was come back, maybe he could do something with him, for Father O'Hara doesn't know him at all. At any rate, I think I'll go this very night and ask his advice."

"Do, Willy," said Mrs. Williams, "and I'd have you go, too, and try to see poor Peter. I wish you could get him to come oftener here, so that we might reason with him, and try to make him understand the danger he's in. Alas! it was an evil day for him, poor misguided boy, when he went back to these people."

"You may say that, Mrs. Williams," said Willy, mournfully, "for if God hasn't forbid it they'll rob him of what little faith he has, — poor fellow, he never could be got to read any books that would have instructed him in religious matters, neither would he go to hear sermons; and how could he know much about his own religion — so they know that very well — these people that he's got in with — and they're the very set that can take advantage

of his ignorance. Oh, girls!" he added, addressing his young sisters with a burst of tender emotion that brought tears to his eyes, "oh, girls! if our poor mother or father was alive and see their son on the way of turning his back on the holy Church of God — but it's well they're not living to see that, for I'm sure it would break their hearts — pray for him, Bridget and Alice," he said, as he arose and took his cap, wiping the tears from his eyes at the same time, "and you, Mrs. Williams, you'll be mindful of him in your prayers — I know you will."

"Indeed, I will, Willy, dear, — may the Lord in his mercy hear our prayers!"

"And Willy," said Alice, running after her brother to the door, "don't forget to tell Peter that Bridget and I are praying for him to the Blessed Virgin — our Mother in heaven — that she may ask God to keep him in the true faith. Tell him that, Willy, and tell him that if he leaves the Church we can't love him as well as we do now, for it'll be so wicked of him that God will be very angry with him, and then we oughtn't to love him as well, you know."

"Yes, yes, Alice dear, I'll be sure to tell him," said Willy, as he stooped to kiss the fair forehead of his little sister. "Go in now, dear, and God bless you till I see you again!"

Willy went straight to Father O'Hara, but

he had not reached his house when he met Dawson, who had been going in quest of him to Mrs. Williams's. "Do you know, Willy," said he, "that I want you to come with me to your confessor, Father O'Hara, as I should like to have a conversation with him regarding some little doubts which I cannot find solved in the books you lent me. Can you take time to come now?"

"With all my heart!" returned Willy, "for the truth is that I'm just on my way to speak to Father O'Hara about my brother, so come along! I know there's no use in hiding my poor brother's affairs from you, for you heard the whole story long ago."

In going to Father O'Hara's house it was necessary to pass through the street in which Mr. Talbot's dwelling-house was situated; and the two friends were just within sight of the door, when a little before them, just where a narrow, dark street, or rather alley, opened on the broader street, they saw a gentleman, who had been walking slowly onward, suddenly struck down by a person who instantly disappeared down the dark alley. The moon was shining brightly, but the cowardly assailant had taken his stand on the shady side of the street, and he was, moreover, muffled up so closely about the neck and face that it would have been difficult to ascertain his identity, even if quite close to him; but yet Dawson exclaimed in an audible whisper: "Why, Willy,"

and he caught his arm, "look there — I'm not here if that ain't Wilson!"

"Hush, hush!" said the other quickly; "never mind who it was — let us run to help the poor man that's lying on the ground."

All this had been the work of a moment; and as it chanced that very few persons were passing that way at the time, Willy and his friend were the first that reached the fallen man. He was lying with his face downwards, for the ruffian had struck him from behind, and as he appeared entirely motionless, Willy cried out in alarm, "Oh, Dawson, he's dead!"

By this time several persons had gathered around, and it was proposed to carry the gentleman to the nearest surgeon. He was taken up by three or four stout men, who were walking off as fast as their heavy burden would permit, when, having caught a glimpse of the face, on which death seemed already to have placed his seal, Willy and Dawson cried out together: "My God! it's Mr. Weimar!" And for a moment both were so terrified that they could not utter a word. The men, seeing that they knew who the gentleman was, instantly stopped, and Dawson, as soon as he could find voice to speak, cried out: "Don't take him to any hospital — if you'll only be good enough to come with us we'll show you his home." They then proceeded to Mr. Talbot's, where poor Weimar resided with the

family, having himself neither wife nor child. When Dawson rang the door-bell, the sound startled all the family within, as he had unconsciously given it a violent shake, for his hand trembled so that he could scarcely command its motion.

Mr. Talbot and his wife, with several servants, all ran to the door, and what a spectacle awaited their eyes! There was poor Mr. Weimar carried in, apparently dead — his gray hair streaming around his face, for his head was of course uncovered. His hat had been forgotten on the street.

“Good God!” cried Mr. Talbot, “what terrible accident has happened to Mr. Weimar? What! Dawson and Burke here? — what is the meaning of all this?”

But Mrs. Talbot here interposed with: “Nay, Henry, the first thing is to see to poor Mr. Weimar. There will be time enough to inquire how this occurred. Will you be kind enough to carry him up stairs to his bed-room?” she said, addressing the men.

“Certainly, ma’am,” said they, “but it’s to be feared that he may be put anywhere you like, for there ain’t a move in him.”

“Oh, I trust in God’s mercy that the case is not quite so bad! But come along at once, for it behooves us to apply some restorative as soon as may be.” And Mrs. Talbot, snatching a candle from a servant, showed the way up

stairs. Her husband staid a little behind, in order to learn the cause of what he saw.

"We were just coming along the street here, Mr. Talbot," said Dawson, "when, just a few blocks from here, we saw poor Mr. Weimar walking on before us, on the shady side of the street — but little we thought it was he — when we saw a person who must have been waiting for him there strike him across the back (or perhaps neck) with something that appeared to be a large stick, and he instantly fell. The assailant ran off down that dark alley to the right here below, and we hastened to the spot where Mr. Weimar lay. When we came up he was lying on his face, and we didn't know it was he till the men carried him out into the moonlight."

"And were you sufficiently near, when it happened, to catch a glimpse of the assailant? Have you any suspicions as to whom it might be?" This question Mr. Talbot addressed to Dawson, and the latter was just answering, —

"To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Talbot —" when Willy Burke interrupted him by saying eagerly :

"Why, indeed, sir, we weren't near enough to say positively who it was, and if we made a guess at any one we might be wrong, so it's better for us only to tell you what we know for a certainty. The man (whoever he might be, sir,) was so muffled up, and we were so far off, that we couldn't venture to say who it was."

Dawson looked askance at Willy, and smiled slightly.

Mr. Talbot looked hard at the animated face of the speaker, and then he shook his head doubtingly, but he contented himself with saying: "And yet the boy is right;" and telling the young men to follow, he hurried up stairs.

One of Mr. Talbot's little children met him above, with the glad tidings that Mr. Weimar was not dead: "Mother says he was only in a swoon, father, and now he begins to move."

When Mr. Talbot entered the room, his wife beckoned him to approach, and told him in a whisper that Mr. Weimar was already showing symptoms of recovery, having even opened his eyes for a moment. "But," said she, "I much fear that his mind may be deranged, for nothing could be wilder than the glance he gave around. You should send at once for Dr. Hammond."

The doctor was accordingly sent for, but before he arrived the patient had somewhat recovered, and, to Mrs. Talbot's great joy, he seemed perfectly sensible. When asked if he felt any pain, he said in a faint, languid voice: "Yes, dere's much pain in de back. I tink dere's some bone broken dere. But my head" — and he raised his hand to his forehead — "oh, dat's worser — my head is bad — very bad — just here."

Mr. Talbot and his wife exchanged looks of alarm, but neither spoke till the arrival of the doctor. Having examined the patient, he turned to Mr. Talbot with a very serious face. "Mr. Weimar's shoulder," said he, "is dislocated, but that is only a secondary consideration; it is that pain in the head of which he complains that makes me fear. The probability is that though no outward sign appears, his head may have sustained some serious injury from the fall, which may produce confusion of the brain." This was said in a low voice to Mr. Talbot, but it was not lost on Weimar himself, for he quickly asked:

"Den you tink me in a bad way, doctor?"

"I did not actually say so, Mr. Weimar," and the doctor glanced admonishingly at Talbot; "but in any case you must be kept perfectly quiet; excitement of any kind must be carefully avoided."

At this moment Weimar caught a glimpse of Willy Burke, where he stood in a corner of the room, and he made him a sign to approach.

Willy bent down over him, and the sick man said, "I know very well I'm worsen den de doctor tells me, and dere is something in *here*," placing his hand on his chest, "dat tells me to prepare for death. Mr. Talbot did tell me once about your moder, dat died so happy, as the priest tell him. I want to die a Cat'lic, Willy Burke, an' den per'aps I'll have a

chance. You go fetch de priest here, tell him come quick, for dat a great sinner is going to die, and wants to be received into God's Church before he leaves dis world. Go fast — fast, boy ! and den come back here, for I want you stay wid me ; it was you make me tink first about religion ; then Talbot lent me great many good books dat showed me de danger I was in, but if the good God will save my soul, I may tank you, after him ; 'cause I see you not like oder boys at all, but good, very good ; and den when I found you so good Cat'lic, and doing just what your priest told you, I said to my own self, ' I must see what dis religion of his is,' and den God gave me de light to see. Go now ! ”

“ Well, sir,” said Willy, struggling to restrain his tears, “ I'll have Father O'Hara here in ten minutes, with God's help, and I'm sure I'm both proud and happy to go on such an errand for you, though I hope there's no danger of your death. At any rate, sir, I'll go as fast as my legs will carry me.”

After telling Mr. and Mrs. Talbot, in a low voice, where he was going, Willy hurried away. The doctor then approached Mr. Weimar's bed, and renewed his injunctions regarding the stillness and repose which could alone, he said, save his patient's life. “ I have allowed you,” said he, “ to finish your conversation with that young lad, but it must absolutely be the last. I must not, and shall not, permit you to speak

to any one on any topic whatsoever, until I see how matters will go."

"Yes, but, doctor, dis is all de matter of my soul; you know very well dat I may die very soon, and what will become of my poor soul if I not try to settle my account wid de great Master of us all? De greater danger I'm in, dere's de more need dat I tink of my soul; 'cause I've neglected it too long, and I've no more time to lose."

"Well, I warn yo t," said the doctor, "that any exciting conversation may cause your death, and that very suddenly; so if you will see the clergyman now, and enter upon a long discourse with him, I will not answer for the consequences."

"Ah, doctor," said the patient, with a faint smile, "you speak so 'cause you Protestant; a Cat'lic would say, 'Mind de soul first, 'cause you may soon have to go before de Judge.' De poor body is not so much to tink of, doctor, so wheder I die or not, I'll have a priest come, and get inside de 'one fold,' before de Great Shepherd calls. If dat makes me die, no matter; it will be only my body, for I hope God will spare my soul, when he gave me de grace to see de right road to heaven."

The doctor drew back in sullen silence, muttering, "Obstinate old fool!" and Mr. Talbot, obeying a sign from Weimar, approached his bed.

"Now, Talbot," said the old man, "you

just tell me how dis happened. I only remember dat I got a great blow on de back dat made me feel as if my heart was broke in two, and den I felt,— dat's all I know."

"And none of us know any more of the matter," said Talbot, in reply; "not even Dawson or Burke, who were both walking after you and saw you receive the blow. The villain ran off down the alley as soon as he had dealt the blow, whereupon they came up, and finding it was you, they came here with the men who brought you home."

"Ha!" said Weimar, as a gleam of fierce anger shot from his eye, "ha! I know; I know dat rascal Wilson; aye, he said he'd meet me, and so he did. But I'll have him hanged for dis— dat is, *you* will, Talbot, if I die. I wouldn't rest in peace if dat fellow wasn't punished for his crimes. Curses on him, de black villain!"

"For mercy's sake, Weimar," interposed Talbot, "do not speak so; you will certainly do yourself harm, and it was very wrong of me to enter into conversation with you on so exciting a subject. Not a word, now, as you value my friendship! Hush, here's the doctor."

But just at the moment Father O'Hara was announced, and Weimar exclaimed joyfully: "Oh, den, doctor, you don't speak one word. Just leave me wid de priest, de doctor of my soul; after he do his part, den I listen to you, and do what you tell me."

"My dear Mr. Talbot," said the priest, as he warmly shook hands with that gentleman, "this is a truly melancholy affair, but yet, see how the Lord draweth good from what appears to us evil. Had Mr. Weimar no previous thoughts of becoming a Catholic?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" exclaimed the patient; "I read great many Cat'lic books, and I pray to God to show me de trut', and den I begin to find out dat all de old notions I had about your religion, and about de priests, was wrong, all wrong. But all de time I couldn't bring myself to say I'd be a Cat'lic, or go to confession, dat I couldn't do, I said, and den I was very much angry wit myself, and when I talked to Mr. Talbot or his wife about it, I said it was about de priests; dat was only an excuse dat de deevil put in my mout', for I know very well now dat God left de priests power to forgive sins in his name. But now, all de bad old pride is gone, 'cause my life is near done, and I want to confess my sins, and get de water of baptism, and be a Cat'lic before I die, for fear God would ask me why I did not 'hear de Church,' as he tell us all to do, and when I could not answer, he surely would send me wit de bad people who rebelled against him."

"How admirable are the ways of the Lord!" exclaimed the priest again, and he raised his eyes to heaven. "Truly has this awful accident been sent as the means of leading you into the true Church, by putting an end to

your irresolution. All praise forever to his holy name!"

Mr. Talbot then beckoned all to follow him from the room, leaving the good father alone with his penitent. Mrs. Talbot then took the opportunity to prepare some suitable draught for the patient, and, before she had returned from the kitchen, Father O'Hara entered the room. Before he had spoken a word to any one, he approached Willy Burke, and laying his hand on his shoulder, he said:

"Rejoice and be glad, my child! for God has given you the special grace of aiding and assisting in the execution of his merciful designs on this man. Under God, he attributes his conversion — and a truly marvellous conversion it is — to your excellent example. So true it is, that the silent influence of example is more efficacious than precept. But let not this tempt you to think better of yourself, Willy; for the greater the favor is that you have received, the more cause you have to humble yourself before the Almighty Giver. May the Lord bless you, my dear child!"

"But you have not heard all, reverend sir!" said Dawson, coming modestly forward; "I am another convert of Willy Burke's making. Not that he ever talked to me about religious matters until I began to think of them myself, and asked him to give me some instructions; but, like Mr. Weimar, I was struck by the wonderful difference between his life and that of

myself and others. I saw him so pious and so regular in going to church, and yet always so gay and cheerful, that he seemed quite happy. And then, no matter what we did or said to him, he never complained of us, and was always ready to oblige us in any way he could; so when I put all together, and compared it with the conduct of all the boys of his age I had seen, I began to think that the religion he professed, and lived up to, must be the right one, for he was the very first Catholic boy I had ever known so intimately. Now, sir, I have been studying your holy religion in all its principal features, and, with God's blessing, I think I understand them tolerably well. I was on my way to your house with Willy Burke when this dreadful occurrence stopped us."

"Allow me to congratulate you, then, on the victory you have gained," said Father O'Hara; "for the arch-enemy of mankind stands ever in the way to prevent, if it be possible, the rebellious children of our holy mother from returning to her embrace. You have overcome him, young man! and may God give you the grace to lead such a life here on earth, that he may, hereafter, award to you the crown promised to those who overcome the enemy of our salvation." Turning then to Willy, he said with a paternal smile, "Why, my young friend, you are a little apostle in your own circle, — take care that you lose none of the many graces God hath given you."

“Indeed, Father O’Hara,” said Willy, his face betraying all the confusion which he really felt, “it’s enough to make any one ashamed to hear himself so praised up ; but then again, when I come to think of it, sure I needn’t be ashamed, for it’s all the work of God himself, and for his greater honor and glory.”

Here Mr. Talbot was summoned to the bedside of Mr. Weimar, who extended his hand as he entered, and said, with a happy smile : “So now I’m a Cat’lic at last, — God be praised ! What you tink, Talbot, isn’t it much happiness to humble one’s self before de good God dat one has so much offended, and confess deir fault, and ask his pardon, and den to hear his minister give de pardon in his name ? When I feel so glad now because I hope dat God will forgive me, or has forgiven me my sins — bad and many as dey were — I can’t think dat I’m de same Weimar dat used to make laugh at confession, — oh ! but God is good, very, very good to have mercy on a poor sinful man like me.”

“I give you joy, my dear friend, from my heart I do,” said Talbot, with unfeigned satisfaction ; “and I would recommend to you to supplicate the intercession of the blessed Mother of our Redeemer. It is scarcely to be expected that you could at this moment collect your thoughts sufficiently to make a review of so many years ; in fact it could not be expected that you would ; your confession,

then, must be more or less imperfect, and before the priest comes again in the morning, your soul may be called hence. Apply, then, to her, who has been called, and truly called, *The Refuge of Sinners, The Help of Christians*; — beg of her to obtain for you the graces of which you stand in need, and, above all, true contrition for your sins."

Having talked a few minutes longer on this subject, Weimar requested that Mr. Jennings, their lawyer, might be sent for, as he wished to make his will as soon as possible. "I tink it best hurry," he said, "for I find much weakness here, — about my heart; tell de doctor, too, to come." The doctor, who had merely withdrawn to another apartment, quickly made his appearance, and was seriously alarmed by the change which had taken place. In fact he found his patient sinking fast, while from certain symptoms about the head, he feared a sudden derangement of the brain. "I would certainly advise you, Mr. Weimar," he said, "to get through with Mr. Jennings, when he comes, as fast as possible; for to tell you the truth, either your life or your senses will very soon give way."

Just then the lawyer entered, and the will was regularly drawn up, with the doctor and Mr. Talbot for witnesses. It was necessary, however, to give a few drops of wine occasionally to the patient, for so great was his weakness, that several times he was obliged to

pause in his dictation. When the will was completed, he appeared truly grateful that he had been enabled to go through with it. "Now," said he, in a low, faint voice, "now I've noting more to do wit dis world, — oh! if I could only know that God will have mercy on my poor soul, I'd be glad to die; but dere, I know very well dat my confession wasn't what it ought to be, and I have much fear. O my God! my good Master! how wicked I have been, — a bad, bad servant. It wasn't for you I worked in my life, but for myself. Oh! what a miserable man I am, — I shut my eyes against de trut' till de very last, and how can I hope to be forgiven? — O Blessed Virgin Mary! I'm so poor a creature dat I dare not look up to dat God whom I have so often offended, but you'll pray for me to your Son, dat he may have mercy on me. I ask your pardon, great Queen! because I have so long time despised your name, but now I know de great power dat you have in heaven, and I hope you'll look with pity on me!"

By this time all the family had assembled around the bed, and the doctor returned, saying that he could do nothing more. "I told Mr. Weimar to avoid excitement," said he, "and he has never ceased talking since. Now he must take the consequences. I shall wait some time, however, in the next room, in case any favorable change might occur, of which, indeed, I have not much hope."

But Weimar heeded not his words, for, just then, he perceived Willy Burke, who was kneeling near the foot of the bed, his head bowed down, and his hands clasped as in fervent prayer. "Ha! Willy!" said the old man, making an effort to raise his voice so as to be heard, "you pray for me; dat's well: and when I'm gone, you pray for me too. Come here!" Willy approached, and bent down to catch the faint accents of the dying man.

"I like you very much, Willy Burke; you good boy; good servant of God. I owe you much, and when my will is opened, you find dat old Weimar did not forget you. You stand up well, and resist temptation when you poor; now dat you'll be richer, do de same, and don't ever forget God, for if you do, I'd be sorry, very sorry, to leave de money to you, 'cause when you come to be where I am now, on the bed of death, all de riches in de world is like noting at all; keep dat always in your mind, and den you need not be afraid of death. May the Lord bless you, and keep you all your life in his holy service! And be sure you don't forget de poor old man dat has so much to answer for in de oder world. Pray for me, morning and evening."

Willy's tears fell fast on the withered face, whereon death was already legibly traced, as he exclaimed, with honest warmth: "With the help of God, Mr. Weimar, I'll never kneel to pray for myself, or for my dead father or

mother, but I'll offer up a prayer for you. Your money, sir, I didn't want, for I don't covet riches, but still I thank you, Mr. Weimar, God knows I do! because it shows that you were pleased with my poor services; and sure I'd have been the most ungrateful boy in the world if I hadn't served you as well as I could, for yourself and Mr. Talbot were the best of friends to me. But, sir, if you were leavin' me all the money you were worth, and you to be dyin' a Protestant, I'd give it all, aye, every cent, to see you as you are. Thanks and praises be to God that He has brought you within the pale of the Church before your death!"

"But, Talbot," said Weimar, making a strong effort to speak, for his speech was almost gone, "dere's one ting I want to tell you before I die: I forgive dat poor Wilson from my very heart. I promised de priest dat I *would* forgive him, and I do; God be praised for it! Tell him dat, if you ever see him, and dat it was de holy and de merciful religion of Cat'lies, speaking by its minister, dat brought me to forgive him, and pray for him too."

He then took a kind and affecting leave of Mr. and Mrs. Talbot and their children, all of whom were bathed in tears, for the old man had been as cheerful and kind in the domestic circle, as he was strict and stern with those whom he employed. "Talbot," said he, and his voice was scarcely audible, even when his

friend bent down over him, "I've left you de sole owner of de joint concern; and of my own money in de funds, I've left something to each of de dear children. De remainder, after Willy Burke's legacy, goes to de good Bishop of New York, to be laid out as he tinks best for de good of religion. Dat's all dat poor old Weimar can do now, to make up for de time dat's past. God bless you, my good, dear friend! God bless you and yours!"

These were nearly the last words poor Weimar was heard to say. Mrs. Talbot commenced reciting the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, all present joining in the responses, and, before the prayer was ended, the soul had passed away, and Mr. Talbot, taking the book from his wife's trembling hand, turned over to the prayers for the dead; Father O'Hara having been obliged to leave soon after he had anointed the dying man.

CHAPTER XII.

WILLY BURKE'S LEGACY.

WHEN Mr. Weimar's will was at length opened, it was found that he had bequeathed to Willy Burke no less a sum than five thousand dollars; to each of the young Talbots two thousand, and the remainder, as he had said, to be given in trust to the Roman Catholic Bishop of New York, to be appropriated at his discretion to Catholic charities. Willy Burke could, at first, scarcely believe it possible that so large a sum was to be his own, but, when he could no longer doubt the fact, he exclaimed in a joyous tone: "Well, sure enough the Lord has worked a miracle for me, and I think I know what for; with his divine assistance I'll do my best to carry his holy will into execution. Oh, may the Lord be good and merciful to your soul, Mr. Weimar! Sure I can never, never forget what you have done for me."

"Why, Willy!" said Mr. Talbot, reproachfully, "you seem to be exceedingly rejoiced that the legacy is so large, and yet I thought

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I heard you assure my poor departed friend that you set little or no value on money?"

"Nor neither I do, sir," replied Willy, in an animated tone; "when I told Mr. Weimar so, I told him the truth, God knows I did; but then, Mr. Talbot, just think, sir, of all that I can do with this money. If you'll just please to listen for a few minutes, I'll tell you what makes me so glad to have it."

And Mr. Talbot did listen, at least as soon as the lawyer had left, and the business of opening the will was completed; and though it took Willy scarce two minutes to unfold his plans, yet it sufficed to call the old familiar smile of kindness and approbation to Mr. Talbot's face. "Well! well! Willy," he said, "I see you are never to be caught thinking of self,—always occupied with others. But really this scheme of yours is a good one. God grant that it may succeed!"

"Oh I'm not afraid but it will, sir!" was the reply. "I'll just go off now and place the whole matter in the hands of the Blessed Mother of God, and she'll not fail to help me; she never does. Good-by, then, sir, for the present."

And away went Willy, his head and heart full of a scheme founded on the legacy of Mr. Weimar. Before making even one step in the affair, he went into a church, and, before an altar of the Blessed Virgin, he besought that gracious mother to assist him in his enterprise. "You know, oh, sweet mother!" he said, with

pious fervor, "you know what I undertake to do is for the greater honor and glory of your Divine Son, blessed be his holy name! and that is the reason why I have such confidence in your aid! Help me, then, O powerful advocate! help me with your prayers, and then I'll be sure of succeeding!" He arose, and left the church, full of a consoling assurance that she to whom none ever sues in vain had heard his prayer, and approved of his design.

A few minutes after, he knocked at Father O'Hara's door, and was quickly admitted to the small room which served for the good priest's study.

"Well, Willy!" said Father O'Hara, laying down the ponderous volume which he had been reading, "what is the matter now, that you are out at this hour of the day?"

"Oh! the old thing, sir," said Willy, with a smile; "I'm goin' to try my hand again at it, and now I'm in a condition to do something better, for, thanks be to God, and poor Mr. Weimar, I have five thousand dollars to work with. Don't you think, sir, that I may begin to hope now, since God has already done so much for me?"

"Five thousand dollars!" repeated Father O'Hara, "is it possible?"

"It is, your reverence, not only possible, but true. But still I haven't all that for this purpose; I only mean to put four thousand into that."

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"And what will you do with the rest?" inquired Father O'Hara.

"Why, sir, I intend to put eight hundred dollars of it in the bank; that is, I'll let it stay where it is, for my sisters — four for each. Then there will be two hundred, and I'm going to give fifty dollars of that divided between your reverence and Father Smith, to have Masses offered up for Mr. Weimar's soul. My father and mother, too, I can now do something for them,— thanks be to the Lord for all his mercies to us!"

"Well, really, my dear boy," said the priest, as he wiped away an obtrusive tear, "well, really, your unworldly forgetfulness of self is so refreshing in these days of cold, grasping selfishness, that it makes me feel almost as though I were young again. But the sum you propose giving to the priests is far too large. I, for one, will remember Mr. Weimar for many a day when I am offering up the Holy Sacrifice,— duty and charity bind me to that, so that you need not set me down for so large a sum. In fact, I'll have none of your money — none; so pass me over, and go on. I will speak to Father Smith, and some others of our brethren, that they may all unite in praying for the departed."

"And he deserved it well," said Willy, "if your reverence knew but all; for, except this legacy to me, and six thousand dollars to Mr. Talbot's children, he left all the rest of his

money that was in the funds to the Bishop, to be laid out on Catholic charities. I believe it makes about twenty thousand dollars, clear of everything."

"Thanks be to God!" exclaimed the priest, clasping his hands together, as he raised his swimming eyes to heaven. "Great is his goodness to us, his unworthy children. And surely that noble bequest comes in the hour of need, for to my certain knowledge the poor Bishop has been harassed for several weeks past for want of funds to carry on some buildings, — he having no less than three of them going forward, and depending entirely on God's goodness. Truly, this is a marvellous blessing."

"Well, now, sir," said Willy, "I'll go, and I hope you'll be at home when we come, — it will be in about an hour or so."

"Unless I am unexpectedly called out, you will find me here."

"Oh! but that's true," said Willy, turning back from the door, "what does your reverence think of Dawson? Is he really sincere?"

"So sincere," said the priest, "that he is coming here this evening for me to hear his confession. I have had several visits from him lately, and he appears so well disposed, that, with God's help, he may soon be admitted to the table of the Lord. You may perhaps find him here when you come."

"If I do, sir, it will be all the better; but

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I'm staying far too long, so I must hurry away now."

It was already drawing towards evening; the slanting beams of the Western sun were gilding the tops of the tall, dingy warehouses on either side as Willy Burke hurried along through a back street, taking the well-known way to Mr. Watkins's office. But ere yet he had got in sight of it he stopped short, and turning down a wider and more handsome street, whose bright brick houses, and green jalousies, and iron palisading, denoted a double range of dwelling-houses, he slackened his pace, and at times stopped altogether, looking anxiously down the street. "He must soon be here," he murmured to himself, "for I know this is about the hour when he leaves the office." He had waited some time, nevertheless, when he saw his brother coming hastily along on the opposite side of the street. Crossing over quickly, Willy caught his arm, saying with a smile: "Why, Peter, you must be in a mighty great hurry, when you were passing without seeing me, and I'm sure I've been long enough waiting for you. It's no easy matter to get seeing you nowadays."

"And whose fault is that?" asked Peter, sharply. "Is it any wonder that I wouldn't put myself in the way of being lectured and drilled by a saucy younger brother?"

"Ah! Peter, Peter," said Willy, shaking his head sorrowfully, "this wasn't the way in old

times. If you were going on as you ought to do, you wouldn't have any need nor wish to shun me, — it's because your own heart reproaches you that you fear me."

"There, now," said Peter, breaking in, "this is the old thing over again; there, you're at it again! Isn't it a poor case that even going along the street I must be waylaid and abused in this manner? What brought you here at all?"

"Well, I'll just tell you that," replied his brother, "if you'll walk this way with me, — it's too public a place to talk of private affairs."

When they had gone some way down a quiet alley hard by, Willy said: "Now, I'll tell you, Peter, what brought me. I suppose you heard of Mr. Weimar's death?"

"I did, the stern old sinner, and I wasn't much sorry."

"Nay, you must not speak of him so, Peter," said Willy, warmly, "for he died a sincere penitent, purified and sanctified by the sacraments of our holy Church; and I trust he has found favor before God."

"Why!" cried Peter in astonishment, "do you mean to say old Weimar died a Catholic, — he that was so bigoted against them?"

"It's as true as that you're standing there," said Willy. "But how did it happen that you didn't hear that before?"

"Well, it was Mr. and Mrs. Watkins that I heard speaking about the old man's death, and

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I suppose they forgot that part of it, — but they seemed to think him a very bad man, and talked a great deal about such a death as his must have been, — so very miserable, and all that."

"Aye," exclaimed Willy, with a bitterness all unusual to him, "it didn't serve their purpose to let you know of Mr. Weimar's conversion; but, be assured, they knew all about it, for Mr. Talbot told me he had himself conversed with Mr. Watkins on the subject. And as to their speaking so hardly of him, that's all because of his becoming a Catholic. At any rate, neither you nor I should be heard speaking ill of Mr. Weimar (even if he had been such as they said, — which he was not), for he has left us independent."

"How is that?"

"He has left me five thousand dollars."

"You don't say so, Willy!"

"But I do, Peter!"

"Why, how in the world did it happen that he took such a fancy to you?" inquired the elder brother, in real amazement.

"Well, I'm sure I don't know," said the younger, with a blushing face; "Mr. Talbot can tell you all about it a great deal better than I can. There's one thing to be said, at any rate, that I can tell you. It was Dawson and myself who found poor Weimar lying on the street (for we saw him receive the fatal blow), and we were present at his death.

It was I, too, that went for the priest for him, and I believe he thought that the best of all."

"Really," said Peter, his countenance darkening as he spoke, "I can't help admiring your good fortune. Five thousand dollars,—and you not seventeen yet! What in the world will you do with it all? But then I suppose you'll get so purse-proud on our hands that you'll not speak to your poor relations."

"Now, Peter, it's very unkind of you to talk so!" said Willy, the tears starting to his eyes. "Sure won't you have the half what I intend keeping of it? I'm going to leave four hundred dollars in the bank for each of the girls, and Mr. Talbot says that by the time they're grown up it will be a great deal more for them, by means of the interest lying over. The two hundred dollars that remains of that thousand, I want for some purposes that I'll tell you at another time, and the four thousand I'm going to divide with you,—that will be two for each of us. I think it will be best for us to leave it in the bank till we're a few years older, and then we'll have it to commence some business. Don't you think that's the best thing to do, Peter?"

But Peter could not speak for some moments. The generosity on the part of his brother touched his heart, and opened it to better feelings. During the few minutes that he remained silent, his memory rapidly ran

over the numberless instances wherein, during the last few years, he had outraged and afflicted his brother; he thought how he had treated his fraternal counsels with scorn and contempt, and how he had trampled on the love of their early years, — and above all, how he had deserted the Church that Willy loved so well, and ranged himself with her enemies; — at least he had all but done this, and now, to see that brother — so wronged — so disgraced — so outraged — bestow upon him, in return, the half of his little fortune, — truly it was more than Peter could bear; the long-buried affection of early youth burst forth again, and when he clasped his brother's hand, and murmured: "God bless you, Willy! God bless you!" that brother felt that a change — a mighty change — had passed over his spirit, and he said within himself:

"I thank thee, O God! I thank and bless thee. Thy gift has, indeed, regained for me the long-lost affection of my brother. Now, sweet Virgin Mother! that I have succeeded so far, I know thou wilt help me in the yet more important attempt to be made.

"Well! now that you find that I'm not 'too proud to speak to my poor relations,' as you said a while ago," said Willy, with a cheerful smile, "will you just come with me and see Mr. Talbot? for I want to ask his advice about our money. And then he'll be so glad to see you, and so will Mrs. Talbot."

Peter hesitated, and blushed deeply. "But then I don't like to go," he said, "Mr. Talbot must think me so ungrateful; in short, he never got much reason to think well of me, and that's the truth, — so I'm ashamed to go."

"Nonsense, Peter!" said his brother, taking hold of his arm, "you never committed any shameful action in regard to Mr. Talbot, that you need fear to meet him; and even if you had, take my word for it he'd be overjoyed to see you repenting of it."

"Well! well! I don't like to refuse you, Willy," said Peter, making an effort to overcome his unwillingness. "But then I have to go home first, as I have some money here for Mrs. Watkins, that I know she's waiting for; after I give it to her, I'll go with you for a little while."

"Then I'll go with you!" said Willy, quickly, "for I know of old that Mrs. Watkins doesn't want you to be on good terms with me, and she might persuade you to stay at home."

"Oh never fear!" was the answer, "she'll be so glad to hear of our good fortune, that she'll have no objection for me to go to see Mr. Talbot. But really it's too bad that you have so bad an opinion of Mr. and Mrs. Watkins, after all they've done for us, — for me, at least. I'm sure if Mrs. Watkins had been my own mother she couldn't have done more for me. And, what do you think, Willy?" he said, drawing

close to his brother, and speaking in a lower tone, "I have strong hopes that they'll make me their heir; do you hear that?"

"Never believe it, Peter, never believe it!" said Willy, with sudden warmth of manner; "they who suggested that hope were but making merry with your credulity, and a few hours after the meeting with you, they twitted me with your being about to turn Protestant for the sake of Mr. Watkins's fortune, though they didn't forget to tell me at the same time that Mr. Watkins has a nephew in Savannah, who is sure to be his heir."

"Well! if that be true," said Peter, his face flaming with anger, "that Wilson is the greatest villain unchanged."

"It is true," said Willy, "but there's no use in railing against Wilson, or any other one; the only thing is, be on your guard against such schemers for the future. But here we are at Mr. Watkins's. I'll go in with you, but I hope you'll not stay long."

Peter opened the door with a latch-key, and seeing the parlor-door open, he told Willy, in a low voice, to go in there, and wait for him. "I'll be back," said he, "in a few minutes."

Peter had not yet reached the door, when he suddenly stopped, hearing his own name mentioned in the adjoining room, which was only separated from the parlor by folding doors. The speaker was undoubtedly Mrs. Watkins;

but what had she said that made Peter Burke change color so?

"Yes!" said the lady, continuing her discourse, "I have great hopes that the meeting will go off well, provided you can get this Burke to come forward and bear testimony against Rome. Only let us prevail upon the silly fellow to appear on the platform as one who has abjured the errors of Popery, and, my life for it! your collection would be a first-rate one. The lad is good-looking, Irish and all as he is, and as a convert from the Roman Church, he will become the great lion of the day. The reason why your collections do not turn out well, latterly, is the great dearth of novelty; and if you can parade this young fellow as one who has just broken the chains of Rome, etc., etc., under your spiritual guidance, you will find your account in it, I assure you."

"Yes," replied a voice that Peter knew to be that of Mortimer, "but I much fear that I cannot, of myself, persuade the lad to appear. I know the effect would be most beneficial to our interests, but these Irish Papists are so obstinately attached to the Church of Rome, that they are scarcely to be tempted to come forth from her; they hug their chains, dear Mrs. Watkins, and laugh at our boasted liberty! This boy, though he appears to us wavering, may be at heart as much a Catholic as ever. But if *you* will try your powers of persuasion, dear, and lovely, and bewitching

as you are, he cannot, he will not refuse. Do, sweet friend!" — and the minister's voice assumed a softer tone — "do, and you will bind Frederick Mortimer by yet another chain, for it much imports me to have this Bible meeting crowned with success."

"I will try what I can do," said Mrs. Watkins in reply; "since you think my persuasive powers so great, they shall be all put forth in your service, and I think I may venture to promise that this hopeful youth will grace your platform as a convert. Oh! how the priests will gnash their teeth, and how all good, pious Methodists will rejoice on the occasion, though between ourselves the fellow is not worth much."

Willy Burke had approached his brother, intending to propose that they should leave the room, for he did not wish to remain where he was an eavesdropper, although unintentionally. But Peter stood as though transfixed, nor attempted to move from the spot until he had heard all; then turning, he caught his brother by the arm, and drew him out into the hall, without saying a word. His face was pale as death, and he appeared literally gasping for breath. Calling a servant, however, he handed to him the note which contained the money, and telling him to give it to Mrs. Watkins without any delay, he motioned for Willy to follow, and hastened to quit the house as though he feared to remain a moment longer.

Neither spoke for some minutes after they left the door, but suddenly Peter stopped, and turned full on his brother :

“ Now, with God’s help, Willy, I’ll never set foot in that house again, for it just seems to me as if it was the gate of hell. While I was listening to that precious discourse the veil fell from my eyes, and now I can see the fearful danger I was in.”

“ Well,” said Willy, as he wiped away with his hand the tears of joy that suffused his eyes, “ I was afraid to see you going in that time, but now I see it was God himself that conducted us there at that moment, so that you might see and hear, from the mouths of your pretended friends, the object they had really in view. But I’m not the least surprised, for when I went into the church on my way here, and besought the powerful aid of the Mother of God in saving you from the snares laid for you, I hadn’t yet finished my prayer when I felt assured that it would be granted. No one ever comes away disappointed that prays to that loving Mother with a pure intention. Besides, Peter, I know very well that God sent me that legacy that I might have a proof of my affection to give you, and so to soften your heart. You see yourself how beautifully all this has come round to bring you back to the way of salvation, from which you were every day going farther away.”

“ I do, I do, Willy !” said Peter, fervently,

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"and I see, too, all that I owe to you. Ah, brother, brother, when *you* were before the altar that time praying for me, it's little thoughts I had of either God or you. Now, thank God! I am sensible of all that you have done for me. I see that your two thousand dollars is but a small thing, a mere trifle, compared with what your pious prayers have obtained for me; where are we going now?"

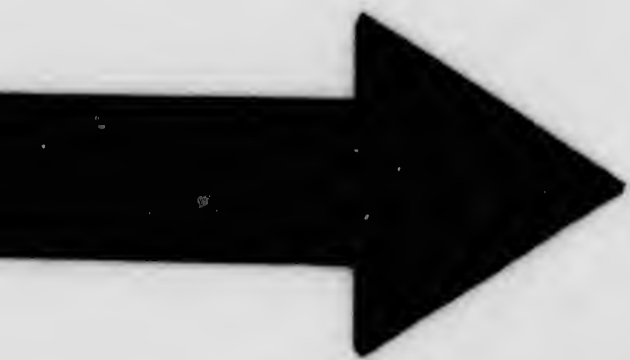
"To tell you the truth," said Willy, with a smile, "I had planned to take you to Father O'Hara's, on our way to Mr. Talbot's, for I knew that you didn't know where he lived, and I wanted to try the effect of his persuasions on you, if mine had failed. I suppose you've no objection to come now?"

"None at all," replied his brother; "it's the very thing I'd wish for."

Great was the joy of Father O'Hara when he learned from Peter himself the wondrous change that divine grace had operated on his soul. "I told your reverence," said the now happy Willy, "that our protectress wouldn't forsake us now. You see she has obtained for us far more than we dared to ask — blessed be her name forever!"

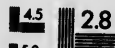
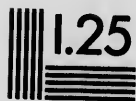
"Amen!" responded Dawson, as he entered, for he, in turn, had been a listener in the vestibule. "I see you're surprised, Peter," he said, addressing the latter, "surprised to hear such language from my mouth, but don't be surprised; under God, I am indebted for my





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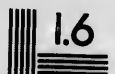
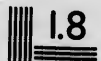
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conversion to the Blessed Virgin, for when I was yet only seeking the truth, groping about in the dark, as it were, your brother, there, prevailed upon me to invoke her aid; and I can solemnly assure you that I was not slow in experiencing the effects of her intercession. I am now a Catholic, thanks be to God for all his mercies! and I can truly say what I heard Mr. Weimar say in his last moments, viz., that I owe my conversion in a great degree to your brother's good example, so beautifully illustrating Catholic faith and Catholic morality."

Peter could not speak; for the second time that evening his heart was too full for words, but he turned and took his brother's hand and pressed it between his own in silent admiration. When he could speak, his exclamation was, "My brother! you are indeed the worthy son of our pious parents; henceforward, with God's assistance, I will endeavor to imitate their example and yours. Oh, sir!" he said, addressing the priest, "you don't know how far gone I was in wickedness, — it frightens me now to look back to where I stood two hours ago, when my dear, dear brother, like the good shepherd, came after me and brought me home; surely, he has saved me from the wild beasts that were lying in wait for me. Would your reverence lend me a pen and ink for a moment?"

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ments he handed the following note to his brother to read : —

“MRS. WATKINS: Peter Burke — that ‘*silly fellow*,’ that ‘*is not worth much at the best*’ (according to your kind recommendation) — takes this opportunity to thank you for all the favors you and Mr. Watkins have conferred on him, especially for the last, when you proposed to do him the honor of appearing at a great Bible meeting to ‘*bear testimony*’; but as said Peter has no wish to be ‘*the great lion of the day*,’ he’ll just take himself off. He sends his compliments to worthy Mr. Mortimer, and assures him that his opinion of ‘*Irish Papists*’ is about right, as far as himself is concerned; — he *is* a Catholic at heart, though unworthy of being called so, by reason of the scandal he has given in listening to such evil counsellors as you and Mr. Mortimer.”

“Short, but not very sweet!” was Willy’s observation, as he handed the note to Father O’Hara, and requested him to read it aloud.

After a little more conversation with the priest and Dawson, the brothers took their leave, and proceeded to the house of Mr. Talbot, where Peter was kindly, even cordially, welcomed. How his heart throbbed with joy as he received the friendly congratulations of Mr. Talbot and his amiable wife, — congratulations which he knew (and *felt*) were sincere.

It was agreed upon, in the course of the evening, that for the present the four thousand dollars was to be invested in railway shares, which Mr. Talbot believed the most profitable method of using it. The brothers willingly acceded to his proposal to remain in his employment for the time being. "With an increase of salary, however," said the generous merchant. "Dawson's place is now vacant, he having been advanced to that which had been Wilson's; if you have no objection, Peter, you can have it, and Willy will assist me in the office, as I have now to take poor Mr. Weimar's post."

The proposal was gratefully accepted, as may readily be believed; and bidding Mr. and Mrs. Talbot good-night, Peter and Willy took their way together to the well-known domicile where the good Mrs. Malcolm held sway. The worthy housekeeper was profuse in her congratulations to both brothers;—the one on his recent accession of wealth, and the other on his escape from the net in which the specious arts of the seducer had held him for so long a time. "But I ken'd vera weel," said she, "that God wad na' let you go unrewarded, even in this world, Willy; I beg your pardon, I should ca' you Mr. Burke, now that you've come into so much riches."

"No, no, no, dear Mrs. Malcolm," cried Willy, with a merry laugh, "just call me Willy; you'd make me ashamed if you'd be-

gin to call me *Mister*, for the title wouldn't sit easy on a young lad like me."

"Ah, I forgot," said Mrs. Malcolm, "that a Christian canna' be proud of money or any earthly good. Vera weel, vera weel, you'll still be Willy Burke, that's a guid laddie!" and so saying, the old lady waddled away to see after some household matter.

Next day the brothers went to church together at six o'clock, and side by side they returned thanks to that God who had blessed them beyond measure. Then it was that Peter Burke felt a soothing calm, long unknown, stealing through his mind; it was the gentle, the beneficent influence of religion, — of that religion which before he had never appreciated; now he began in sober earnest to estimate its value. It is true that he was still weighed down by the remembrance of his manifold sins, but the grace of true contrition was not withheld from him, and he trusted in the goodness of God for pardon for the past, and strength to avoid sin for the time to come. When Mass was over, and they leaving the church, Peter told his brother that he would go to confession in the course of the evening, and Willy, as may well be imagined, heard the announcement with unmixed satisfaction, for now he knew that his brother was sincerely converted.

After leaving the office that evening, the two brothers went first to confession, and then hast-

ened to impart joy to the loving hearts of their young sisters.

It is not easy to conceive the rapture with which Alice and Bridget heard the glad tidings. They both sprang into Peter's outstretched arms, and fairly sobbed out. Then they drew back to look at him again, as though they feared the evidence of their eyes.

"Well to be sure," cried Alice, wiping away with her pretty apron her fast-falling tears, "well to be sure, but that is good news. It's a fine thing to hear that we're all so rich now, thanks be to God and our dear brother Willy! But the best of all is Peter's getting good again. Oh, indeed it is!"

"And Peter," asked Bridget, "won't you be good to us now, like Willy, — and won't you be coming to church with us again, and to pray at mother's grave, too? Oh, Peter, if you'd see how long the grass is on it now; and there's so many little flowers, wild flowers, growing among the grass! Now you'll come next Sunday, won't you?"

"I will, indeed, Bridget, dear, please God!" said Peter, his voice husky with emotion, and his eyes filled with tears.

Here Mrs. Williams entered, and the whole story was gone over again for her. Great was the joy of that true friend, but a cloud gathered on her face as a saddening idea presented itself to her mind. "I'm afraid you'll be tak-

ing my girls from me," she said, "now that you have become rich."

"No, indeed, Mrs. Williams," said Peter and Willy together; and the latter added, "not on any account, if you still wish to keep them. It was God that put it in your heart to take them. You have been a mother to them; be so still, in God's name, and with his blessing! We couldn't place them in better hands, until such time as they're able to do for themselves. By that time I hope they'll be so well grounded in their faith, that there will be no danger of it slipping from them."

Mrs. Williams was delighted to hear this, and voluntarily renewed her promise to be a mother, as far as she could, to the interesting charge that Heaven itself had committed to her keeping.

From Mrs. Williams's the young men went to Mrs. O'Grady's, and they found that worthy woman and her family mourning around the death-bed of the husband and father. Poverty was in and around the dwelling, and amid all their sorrow for him who was about to leave them, his wife and children could scarcely wish that his life might be spared, so great were the privations they were all called upon to bear. This was no time for communicating their own good fortune, so the brothers went away without saying a word about their own affairs. Next day, however, Willy Burke, with Peter's consent (which he took care to ask, as

though it had been necessary), drew fifty dollars from the bank, and when, that same night, he and his brother repeated their visit, they brought joy to the house of mourning. Death was there, it is true, for poor Barney O'Grady had departed in the course of the previous night, but they gladdened the hearts of the desolate widow and her children by a gift which raised them, for the time, above want, and enabled them to bury their dead in a respectable manner; and Mrs. O'Grady said: "It'll leave something in our hands, besides, to commence some little business when we get things settled. May the great God reward you, Willy Burke and Peter, for all that you've done for me and mine! An' he will, you may be sure he will. An' sure isn't he givin' *you* now the reward of your mother's good works? Glory be to his holy name!"

"It is very true, Peter," said Willy to his brother, when they had quitted the house, "it is very true what poor Mrs. G'Grady says,—the great blessings that we have received and are receiving, are, I doubt not, the hundred-fold reward which the Christian virtues of our parents induced the Lord to bestow even on us, their unworthy children."

Before they went home they purchased a handsome present for good Mrs Malcom, "who stood my friend," said Willy, "when, except Dawson, there was not one to speak for me." It was a piece of rich silk for a dress; and

never was young queen, newly crowned, prouder of her jewelled diadem than was the worthy Scotchwoman of her dress.

"For," said she, "it is na the value o' the thing that I haud account o'; na, na, it's the gratitude o' the laddie that mak's me set sae muckle store by his present. You see, laddies," addressing the other young men, "that when riches came into his hands he did na forget the auld Scotch wife nae mair than anither."

Dawson and the two Burkes were henceforward bound in the strictest bonds of friendship, and all three made themselves respected wherever they were known, by their scrupulous observance of the divine virtues inculcated by the Church as the oracle of truth. After a few years they commenced business together under the friendly auspices of Mr. Talbot, and Dawson married Alice Burke, then a lovely girl of eighteen. The younger sister soon after gave her hand to a wealthy planter from the South (a connection of Mr. Talbot's), who had been attracted not less by her modest and retiring virtues than by her personal charms.

About six years after Mr. Weimar's death, and just after the marriage of Bridget Burke, Peter happened to take up a newspaper one evening, but suddenly he let it fall, exclaiming: "How terrible are thy judgments, O Lord! Great art thou in thy mercy and goodness to those who love and serve thee, but

awful thou art, O God, in chastising the wicked!"

"Why, what have you there?" cried one and another anxiously.

"Read for yourselves," he said, laying the paper on the table.

"Alas!" said Willy, with a deep sigh, when he had read the paragraph pointed out by Peter, "alas! poor, miserable Wilson! what a fate was yours! This accounts for our never having heard anything of him since that terrible deed was done. He had long since entered, it seems, on a sea-faring life, and his ship was just coming into harbor here when a fire broke out on board. The greater part of the crew escaped from the burning vessel, but of the four men who, being unable to get off in time, were burned up, one was '*George Wilson, a native of Perth, Scotland, aged 29.*' That this was our unhappy acquaintance of former days, none may doubt."

"And such might have been my fate, too," said Peter, raising his hands and eyes to heaven, "hadst thou not recalled me, my God, from the way of sin and error to the safe and pleasant path which conducts to eternal life. Oh, that every Catholic boy who is thrown at an early age on his own resources could hear my story, and learn from my example the danger of tampering with the enemies of his faith!"

My tale is now at an end. I have en-

deavored to delineate for my young readers the part which a Catholic boy is called upon to act in society, and have shown to the best of my ability the beneficial results which may accrue from the fulfilment of his duty, not only as regards himself, but those who are unhappily wandering in the wilderness without the pale of the Church. I have sought to place Religion before the youthful reader as she really is, mild, and cheerful, and softening in her influence. Would that I could but paint her even one half as lovely as she is, and the portrait would suffice to attract and attach the young to her service !

THE END.

