

A WASTRAL.

BY DAVID BEAME, S. J.

If it be true that some people read so much that they have no time left for thinking, it may also be a fact that some who cannot read do a great amount of thinking.

William Lethers was a case in point. He had retired from the clog trade with a very snug little income, more than sufficient for the needs of himself and his wife.

There is an acre or so of garden behind the pretty cottage that Billy has owned these many years, and beyond the garden, removed far enough from the house to be inoffensive, there are several pig sties and a poultry run.

On the occasion of the fall referred to above, he was compelled to clear his pockets in the widow's presence, for that the yolks and whites of six eggs were hopelessly mixed up with a packet of tobacco, a winter cabbage, two pounds of steak, a packet of snuff, half a dozen oranges and a piece of bacon.

"Whatever you do, woman," he said to Mrs. Kerry, "don't tell Jane. I should never hear 't last out. I'm gone round by Farmer Joyce's and get some more eggs; they are for a badly body who can eat now, else. An' I wunna give 'em shop ups."

His particular devotion was to old people. "I shanna go 't workin' while William Lethers is alive—that's sure, was a thing you heard 't readin' and again from some poor old man or woman in receipt of parish relief, and whose poverty was made more than bearable by Billy's benefactions.

used to boast. But to get her to make beef tea and jelly he had to be diplomatic. He never dreamt of asking her directly for such things. She had clients of her own and she thought them much superior to Billy's. They were all respectable folk, she sometimes reminded him, and he knew what she meant.

"If I dunna see Billy before I dee, you mun thank him for me, feyther. But for you and Billy I should be lost, body and soul. It behaved mortal bad to ye, feyther. I was alive promisin' I'd cum to Mass and I niver cum. An' when I war took sudden like, I dina think I war goin' to dee, and I should niver sent for ye if it hadna bin for Billy. He cum 'most every mornin' to say me, an' he niver cum empty 'anded. It war Billy what got me off 't drink. He made a bargain wi' me, like. He said, 'Joe, if thou it stop goin' to eat iverly day, I'll send thee summat to eat iverly day and kape thee 't bacco.' An' he did."

The particular story that I set out to tell is connected with one of these wastrels, and (as in all these Ridingdale stories) the only fiction in it is in the matter of proper names.

A worse case than that of "Oae Eyed Jim," as he was always called, could scarcely be imagined. Even Sergeant Murphy had forgotten the number of times this ex-soldier, ex-prize fighter, ex rat catcher and ex-great many things, had been in prison. Unhappily, his wife was in most respects like unto him. Father Horbury said they had never been seen in each other since they were married.

On the following morning Billy fettered his pigs and potted about in his garden rather longer than usual. He was thoughtful and a little depressed. The image of Oae-Eyed Jim was before him—suffering, lonely, helpless and perhaps impenitent. As a rule, in all cases of sickness and need Billy knew exactly what to do and did it promptly, but this case was such an exceptional one. He could not do it with the sick man, but Jim's wife could play the violin. And to leave a bottle of wine or brandy in such a house would have been the gravest of all mistakes.

for a minute. I've bin thinkin'—thinkin' about Oae-Eyed Jim. Doctor says he's mortal bad, an' he'll niver be any better 't this world. It's 't late to lek him 't workin' now, if they wanted."

"Tommy," began the old man, after another pause, "when we goes down to supper I want thee to talk about Oae-Eyed Jim. Yer grand mother canna thole him at all, but niver mind; ye go on axing me questions about him; ye understand, lad?"

When supper was over William went out, as his custom was, to look up various outchouses and to give an eye to the hens and pigs. He had scarcely passed through the back door that led into the garden when Mrs. Lethers said to Tommy:

"Bin of an arrand, Tommy?" asked William. "Yes, grandfather," said the boy. William only wondered why the lad's eyes shone so brightly. That was the time when Tommy always read aloud to the old people, and thought he was a little out of breath to-night, he read very well. Then came night prayers and bed.

"How's Jim this morning?" Billy inquired. "He's a bit easter now," said the woman, pausing in her scrubbing. "Your wife's brightened him up wunnerful like. I reckon it's summat her's put in 't bef tea her browt wi' her."

It was lucky the woman went on talking and wiping the floor, because it saved the whole situation. Yet it took Billy some time to recover from so sudden, but delightful, a shock. His first thought was to retire hastily, but he felt that he must ask one or two questions. He had only spoken a few words when the door of the sick room opened and Jane Lethers appeared.

Not long ago Father Horbury said to Mrs. Lethers: "Jim has kept his promises very faithfully. Since his recovery he has never once missed Sunday Mass or monthly Communion."

In the series of papers on "Careers of Danger and Daring," running in St. Nicholas, Cleveland Moffett, in the last issue of that magazine, has one on "The Fireman."

THE HEROES OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. Fireman McDermott's Feet.

AN ERROR ABOUT IMAGE WORSHIP CORRECTED. Though of late years the number is fast diminishing, there are still some non-Catholics to be found who in their ignorance of Catholic doctrines, honestly imagine that the reverence paid by Catholics to images and other religious symbols is superstitions.

Catarrh

It is a constitutional disease. It originates in a scrofulous condition of the blood and depends on that condition. It often causes headache and dizziness, impairs the taste, smell and hearing, affects the vocal organs and disturbs the stomach.

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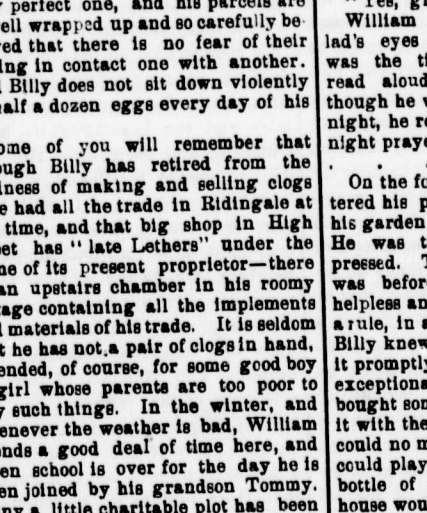


Illustration of a man's face, likely related to the 'Wastral' story.



Illustration of a woman's face, likely related to the 'Wastral' story.

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THE CATHOLIC RECORD

LEGEND OF THE ASSUMPTION.

Soft the August lilies wave, So blue the skies of August bend, All winds are silent in their cave...

only by a formal denunciation, that if, ferenda sententia, I am not sure...

FIVE-MINUTE'S SERMON.

Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost.

THE CARELESS CHRISTIAN.

"He hath done all things well; he hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak..."

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.

Reserving the complicated history of Protestantism in the Low Countries for the possibilities of further examination...

The true statement, then, is this. In 1678, according to the grimly perverted Spanish taste, the young French Queen was asked...

God is speaking to us in His Holy Church and by all her instructions, which were carefully taught us in our youth...

Our Lord healed the deaf and dumb man apparently with difficulty. He did not merely speak the word...

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whirling his lash with practiced hand. "Down Eros, up Mars!" he repeated, and caught the well-doing Arabs of Ben Hur a cut the like of which they had never known.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Never be discouraged because good things go on so slowly here, and never fall daily to do that good which lies next to your hand. Do not be in a hurry, but be diligent. Enter into the sublime patience of the Lord. Be charitable in view of it. God can afford to wait; why cannot we, since we have Him to fall back upon? Let patience have her perfect work, and bring forth her celestial fruits.

BRADDOCK'S PASTOR TO VISIT CARNEGIE.

Pittsburg, Pa., July 23.—Father John Hickey, pastor of St. Thomas's Church, at Bradock, intends to visit Andrew Carnegie at Skibo Castle, Scotland, in the latter part of August. Father Hickey and Andrew Carnegie were boys together and have always been friendly. Mr. Carnegie has been remodeling Skibo Castle and recently he asked Father Hickey to come over and reconsecrate the redecorated chapel.

PALE AND DEJECTED.

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