





THEIR STORY RUNNETH THUS.

By FATHER RYAN.

Two little children played among the flowers, Their mothers were of kin, tho' far apart;

The children's ages were the very same, And dreamed amid the roses of her cheeks.

Her voice was sweetly low; and when she spoke Her words were music; and her laughter rang

So like an altar-bell that had you heard! Its silvery sound ringing, you would think

Of kneeling down and worshipping the pure. They played among the roses—it was May—

And "hide and seek," and "seek and hide," all day They played together till the sun went down.

Earth held no happier hearts than theirs that day: And tired at last she plucked a crimson rose

And gave it to him, her playmate, cousin-kin; And he went thro' the garden till he found

The whitest rose of all the roses there, And placed it in her long, brown, waving hair,

"I give you red—and you—you give me white: What is the meaning?" said she, while a smile,

As radiant as the light of angel's wings, Swept bright across her face; the while her eyes

Seemed infinite—until she did make reply, "Sweet Ethel! white dies first—'you know, the snow,

(And it is not as white as thy pure face) Melts soon when—but roses red as mine

Will bloom when all the snow hath passed away." She sighed a little sigh, then laughed again,

And hand in hand they walked the winding ways Of that fair garden till they reached her home.

A good-bye and a kiss—and he was gone. She leaned her head upon her mother's breast,

And ere she fell asleep, sighing, called, "Does white die first? my mother: and does red

And winds sang "De Profundis" over them, And skies were sad with shadows, he did walk

Where in a resting-place as calm as sweet, The dead were lying down; the Autumn sun

Was half way down the west—the hour was three, The holiest hour of all the twenty-four,

For Jesus leaned His head on it, and died, He walked alone amid the virgin's graves,

And o'er the buried virgin's tomb stood near by, Where from the solitary cells of nuns

Unto the cells of death the way was short, Low, simple stones and white watched o'er each

grave, While in the hollows 'tween them sweet flowers grew,

Entwining grave with grave. He read the names Engraven on the stones, and "Rest in peace"

Was written 'neath them all, and o'er each name A cross was heaved on the lowly stone.

He passed each grave with reverential awe, As if he passed an altar, where the Host

Had left a memory of its sacrifice, And o'er the buried virgin's virgin dust

He walked as prayerfully as tho' he trod The holy floor of fair Loretto's shrine.

He passed from grave to grave, and read the names Of those whose pure lips had changed the

names, By which this world had known them into names Of sacrifice known only to their God;

Veiling their faces they had veiled their names, The very ones who played with them as girls,

Had they passed there, would know no more than he, Or any stranger where their playmates slept.

And then he wondered all about their lives, Their thoughts, their feelings, and their dreams,

He told her of the night when all the flowers, A listless, heard the words of sacrifice—

He told her all; then said: "I saw a stone In yonder graveyard where your sisters sleep,

And wrote on it, all hid by roses white, I saw a name I never ought to forget,

She wore a startled look, but soon repressed The wonder that had come into her face,

"Whose name?" she calmly spoke. But when he said "Ullaine,"

She forward bent her face and pierced his own With look intense; and he thought he heard

The trembling of her veil, as if the brow It nestled, throbbled with many thrilling

thoughts, But quickly rose, and in hurried tone Spoke thus: "'Tis hour of sunset, 'tis our rule

To close the gates to all till to-morrow's morn. Return to-morrow, then, if so God wills, I'll see you."

He gave many thanks, passed out From that unworshipful place into the world,

Straight to the lonely graveyard went his steps, Swift to the "White-Rose-Grave," his heart: the

bell. Upon its grass and prayed that God might will The mystery's solution; then he took,

Where it was drooping on the slab, a rose, The whiteness of whose leaves was like the foam

Of summer waves upon a summer sea. Then thro' the night he went And reached his room, where, weary of his

thoughts, Sleep came, and coming found the dew of tears Undried within his eyes, and hung her veil

Around him. Then he dreamt a strange, weird dream, A rock, dark waves, white roses and a grave,

And cloistered flowers, and cloistered nuns, and That shone like jewels on a diadem,

"God gave my mother only me,—one year. This very day He parted us." "Poor child!"

"I murmured—'Nay—kind sister—she replied: 'I know much wealth—they left me ample

means. I have true friends who love me and protect. I was a minor until yesterday;

But yesterday all guardianship did cease, And I am mistress of myself and all.

My words mean—and, Sister, they are true. If thou but take myself—'nay—don't refuse.' 'Nay—'nay—'my child!' I said—'The only

wealth. We wish for is the wealth of soul—of grace, Not all your gold could unlock yonder gate,

Or buy a single thread of virgin's veil. Not all the coins in coffers of a king

Could bribe an entrance here for any one. God's voice alone can claim a cell—a veil,

For any one He sends. My child?—'Myself?' Or did some holy one Direct thy steps?—'Or else some sudden grief?

Or mayhap, disappointment? Or perhaps, A sickly weariness of that bright world

Hath clouded thy spirit? Tell me, which it is. 'Neither—'she quickly, almost proudly spoke. 'Who sent out them?'

"A youthful Christ—she said— Who had lived in those far days of Christ,

Would have been His beloved Disciple, sure, Would have been His own gentle John; and

would Have leaped, on Thursday night, upon His breast And stood, on Friday eve, beneath His cross

To take His Mother from Him when He died. He sent me here—he said the word last night

In my own garden,—this the word he said: 'Oh! had you heard him whisper: 'Ethel, dear! Your heart was born with veil of virgin on—'

The dower of her mind, and she of her heart, Was of the richest, and she mastered art.

By instinct more than study. Her weak hands Moved ceaselessly amid the beautiful.

There is a picture hanging in her choir She painted. I remember well the dream

She came to me and told me she had dreamt A dream; then asked me would I let her paint

Her dream; I gave permission. Weeks and weeks Went by, and every spare hour of the day

She kept her cell all busy with her work. At last 'twas finished, and she brought it forth—

A picture my poor words may not betray. But you might gaze on it with your own eyes,

And drink its magic and its meanings in; I'll show it thee, kind sister, before you go.

In every May for two whole days she kept Her cell. We lumored her in that, but when

The days had passed, and she came forth again, Her face was tender as a lily's leaf,

With God's smile on it—and for days and days Thereafter, she would scarcely open her lips

Save when in prayer; and then her very look Was rapt as if her soul did hold with God

Strange converse. And who knows? mayhap she did.

I half forgot—on yonder mantlepiece You see that wondrous crucifix; one year

She spent on it, and begged to put beneath That most mysterious word—"Ullaine."

At last the cloister's angel disappeared; Her face was missed at choir, her voice was missed—

Her words were missed where every day we met In recreation's hour:—And those who passed









