

D. Elcheverry,

The Blessed Virgin receiving Holy communion from St. John.

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To a First Communicant

God keep thee pure and holy
Sweet lamb of the Master's Fold ;
Nestle closer in the arms
That long thee to enfold.

Heaven's choicest graces
All are thine to-day ;
Gifts that make earth's treasures
Fade like mist away.

Guard these gifts, like tender plants
Needing special care ;
Soon thy recompense shall be
Eternal blossoms rare.

As love has made thee welcome
Thy Eucharistic Guest ;
May love ever keep Him
Enthroned within thy breast.

CARMEL.



Thoughts for the Month of May

(See frontispiece)



HE Church surrounds the Blessed Sacrament with an atmosphere of purity. The host which she permits to be carried to the altar must be absolutely spotless; not only to the adorable body of our Lord, but to the accidents as well. she applies, in the solemn reverent language of the liturgy, the words that have been used from ancient times, "the pure host, the holy host, the immaculate host." How she lingers and insists on the stainless character of her offering and her Victim! The corporal on which Christ rests must be free from every blemish, and the paten, at least where it touches the sacred species, must be of polished gold. Innocent children are chosen to strew the flower petals before their Eucharistic God, only blameless priests may put the key into the tabernacle, and even they, before and during the Mass, must purify their fingers to make them wholly free from every tiny speck of dust, and to symbolize to all those present how free from sin should be all participants in this holy act of worship.

In doing this the Church is only following the example of God Himself. In banishing from everything that comes in contact with Christ's Sacred Body all uncleanness, she has only done what God once did when He prepared the first resting-place of His Incarnate Son. It was the fairest, purest, holiest of all the daughters of Adam that the Father chose as the Mother of His Son. It was in view of her divine maternity that Mary was excluded from the general law, that because the father of mankind had fallen, all his children should be born

in sin. It was because God was to take up His abode within her that she was preserved from the least touch or taint of sin. Days and months and years were to be spent by her in close companionship with Christ, her Son. Who could count the hours of lowly adoration which she, His mother, who kept all things in her heart, spent in presence of God made man? These two privileges or rather duties of our Blessed Lady, her reception of her God, and her reverent worship of Him whom she knew, in spite of His sonship to herself, to be divine, were the reasons for that stainless purity that raised her above all others save only Christ.

Those who love to kneel in Christ's Sacramental Presence and to receive His Sacred Body in the Sacrament of His love, should be emboldened by our Lady's privilege to ask something at least of the same freedom from sin for their own poor souls. The strict demand for purity which obtained in Mary's case holds good in theirs as well, only in a less exalted way. Jesus is to come and rest close to their hearts in Holy Communion. He is to remain in His tabernacle home, which is their home too; they are to receive His adorable Body; they are to kneel in His Sacred Presence for many precious hours to come. Surely, therefore, they may ask with confidence that just as the quiet holiness which clung round the House at Nazareth has its counterpart in the hushed air of sanctity which pervades our sanctuaries; so, too, the utter sinlessness of Mary's heart may be reflected, faintly it may be, but truly, in their own. Mary was the first adorer and the first communicant. She will make the souls of other adorers and other communicants, if they ask her humbly, pure and stainless like her own.



What compensation for the fatigues of the journey must the Blessed Mother have found in the presence of her Son! If my road, like hers, lies uphill, why do I not find strength and comfort in Jesus, present with me always by sanctifying grace, and present Body and Blood and Soul and Divinity, in the Blessed Sacrament - as really present as He was with Mary!



“Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament”



QUEEN ESTHER, we read in the Old Testament, once invited to a sumptuous banquet, which she had prepared, Assuerus, the King of Persia, and Aman, his prime minister. Her royal consort graciously consented to come to the dinner, and as for Aman, he was so flattered by the invitation that, calling together his friends, he announced to them, as a joyful climax to all the honors conferred on him by the royal bounty, that “Queen Esther hath invited no other to the banquet with the king but me, and with her I am also to dine to-morrow with the king.”

Queen Esther had a deep purpose in holding this little party. For she hoped that the banquet would give the king such pleasure that he would be willing to grant her a great favor she meant to ask of him in behalf of her people, the exiled Jews. Her plan succeeded. For Assuerus was so gratified by the entertainment the Queen provided that after dinner he said to her:

“What is thy petition, Esther, that it may be granted thee? And what wilt thou have done? Although thou ask the half of my kingdom, thou shalt have it.”

“If I have found favor in thy sight, O King,” answered Esther, “and if it please thee, give me my life which I ask, and my people for which I request.”

Her prayer was no sooner heard than granted, for she not only secured the revocation of a royal edict condemning to death on a certain day all the Jews in the Persian Empire, but she brought down upon the enemies of her race the very ruin they had plotted against Israel.

Now, Queen Esther effectually interceding with King Assuerus for her people is a manifest type of Our Blessed Lady pleading with Almighty God for us, sinners. The banquet, moreover, prepared by the beautiful Jewish wife of King Assuerus prefigures the bounteous table of the Holy Eucharist, which the Queen of Heaven may be said to have provided for her children.

For Mary seems almost as closely associated with the institution of the Blessed Sacrament as with the Incarnation. The Word made Flesh we owe largely to our Lady. Her holiness brought God down to this earth and Jesus was Mary's Christmas gift to the world. But the Holy Eucharist is the Incarnation perpetuated. It is the Flesh our Saviour took from His Virgin Mother that He gives us in the Blessed Sacrament. "The flesh of Jesus," observes St. Augustine in this connection, "is the flesh of Mary, and the Saviour gives us this flesh of Mary as the nourishment of our salvation." The same Holy Doctor, contemplating the Infant Jesus at his Mother's breast, exclaims in a rapture of devotion: *Lacta, O Virgo, panem nostrum!* "Nourish, O Maiden, our Bread?" as if he would say: "By feeding thus your Divine Son, Mary, you are also feeding all the faithful whose nourishment He is one day to be. Let it then, be your one care and solicitude, gentlest Mother, to watch over and protect our Eucharist."

So, in this sense, our Lady may be said to have given us the Blessed Sacrament. Francis Suarez, moreover, the great Jesuit theologian, does not fear to assert that the Holy Eucharist was instituted chiefly for Mary, because Jesus loved her best of all. Other grave theologians are of the opinion that He had promised during the quiet years at Nazareth to make His flesh the food of her and her children, and that her request for the miracle at Cana was but to remind Him of His promise. For the miracle of the marriage feast, according to the Fathers, is a type and figure of the Holy Eucharist, even more striking than Queen Esther's banquet.

Picture the scene of this second banquet. Many villagers of Cana have already gathered at the home of the bridegroom. That important person, gorgeously clad, has led his veiled bride into her new home, while

ten wise virgins, their lamps well trimmed, sing songs of joy to the music of the flute. Within the house are arranged long tables decked with flowers and lights and laden with the richest viands the means of the groom's parents can provide. The seats of honor are taken by the newly wedded couple, Jesus we must look for in the lowest place, for He "began to do" before He taught. Beside Him sits His Mother, and not far off His six disciples.

As the night wears on, the supper-room resounds with gayety and laughter, which our Saviour's presence sanctifies and sanctions. Far from dampening in any way the harmless merriment, He whose conversation knows no bitterness, and His company no tediousness, increases by His singular charm of manner and His unaffected interest in others the enjoyment of His fellow-guests. But when the mirth of all is at its height, the watchful Virgin observes the waiters first whispering together and then serving out the wine more sparingly. What she feared had happened—the wine is failing. Then this gracious Lady turns unasked to her all-powerful Son and, with a mother's confidence, says simply; "They have no wine."

There are but few of Mary's words recorded in the Scriptures. In all, we have but seven of her utterances quoted, and two of these precious sayings were first heard at the marriage-feast of Cana. Now, if the world makes much of even the most trifling observations of its great ones, what deep consideration should not the children of light give the rare words of God's own Mother.

"They have no wine." Mary's words are few, but they are full of power and meaning, for they are those of a mother pleading for her children. According to the Eucharistic interpretation of this text, it is as if our Lady asked: "Give them now, my beloved Son, that wine of the Blessed Sacrament that you long ago promised me that you would one day leave us as the means of uniting in a mystic marriage the soul with her Creator. Make this your first miracle."

Now, mark well our Lord's answer: "Lady, my hour is not yet come," or, by implication, "Mother, I re-

member my promise, but this is neither the time nor the place for me to fulfil it. The world must first be prepared by my public ministry to receive the Holy Eucharist, which I will finally give you, Mother, at a far more solemn banquet than this. However, as a new pledge that I will then turn wine into my precious Blood, I will now change water into wine."

We now know to what hour the Saviour was alluding; the hour of His First Mass, celebrated just after that solemn banquet He attended the night before He died. For, with Father Coleridge as a guide, we may picture the institution of the Blessed Sacrament as taking place not at the table of the Last Supper, with only the Apostles present, as is commonly represented, but in another part of the Cenacle, to which the Eleven followed the Master on His saying "Arise, let us go hence!" Gathered there were the seventy-two disciples, the holy women, and our Lady, waiting to assist at the wonderful Banquet foreshadowed by Esther's feast and Cana's wedding supper.

The mindful Mother has everything in readiness. Then her Divine Son, following a ritual not unlike that which St. Peter, who was present, afterwards gave the Roman Church, and which is essentially the same to day, changed with His creative word bread and wine into His Sacred Body and Blood, while all adored. The Queen of the Apostles, in particular, kneels by, breathless with devotion, until Communion time comes, then reverently drawing near the Altar, with joy receives again from His own hand her Blessed Son. A Queen's banquet, indeed!

Who can doubt that this Communion of Mary's was but the first of a long series, beginning on Easter morning and continuing daily without interruption till the day of her death? Until His Ascension, Jesus Himself surely communicated His Blessed Mother every morning, on His part rejoicing to give as nourishment to that stainless maiden the sacred Flesh that she had given Him, and she glad to be thus nourished daily by Him, whose babyhood it had been her daily privilege to nurse.

The time before Pentecost, too, was doubtless a novena of Communions for Mary and all who were per-

severing in prayer with her in the Cenacle and after the coming of the Paraclete the long years she passed at Jerusalem and Ephesus in the Beloved Disciple's keeping were made supportable for the exile by daily Communion. Modern painters love to depict the scene. While envying angels look on, the Maiden-Mother kneels at the altar of a sunlit oratory to receive again from St. John's hand the God who first came to her the night of the Annunciation, years before, but who still comes daily, bringing from Heaven a message ever new.

Like her Divine Son, our Lady is a model for us in all things. What she did she would have her children do. Though she is eager for the salvation and the hallowing of all, she would have that brought about only in accordance with the laws established by her Son. "Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye," she told the waiters at the marriage feast, and this she says to us likewise. Christ solemnly avers: "Amen, Amen, I say to you, except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you," so His prescient Mother, as if to remind us from the very first that her Babe was meant to be our food, brought Him forth at Bethlehem "the house of bread," and "laid Him," be it noted, "in a manger," a feeding-place.

Do not the Virgin Mother's images, too, in our churches commonly represent her ever holding out to us her Blessed Son, as if inviting all to receive Him often? Artists, however, are not always successful in making her appear really eager to give us her Lambkin, for her way of holding Him out is frequently so stiff and unnatural that she does not seem to be very desirous to have us take Him.

But in an ancient church at Avignon, in France, travelers tell us an unknown sculptor has left a statue of our Lady and the Divine Child that admirably expresses in stone the mother's eagerness to place her Little One in the arms of every pilgrim coming to her shrine. Genius has given life to the cold marble. Mary, a girl of perhaps eighteen, shows in her face and in every line of her supple figure the vigor, the alertness, and the animation of youth. She has apparently heard the visitor walking up the aisle. She has lifted her head, thrown

back her outer robe, turned a little to the right, as though to intercept the stranger, and, leaning forward while the Infant reclines in both her hands, extends Him toward the altar-rail. In her face there is wistful confidence. Who can refuse her Child? Her lips would speak, did she not know that what she offers is far more eloquent than words. The Infant has turned slightly from His mother. His head is raised; the lips are parted in a smile, and the short, rounded arms and tiny hands are held out in mute appeal to be lifted from Mary's hands. Beneath the statue is the door of the tabernacle. Within, our Lord waits silently and with infinite patience. He who rules the minds of His creatures has inspired His servant, the devout sculptor, to place above the tabernacle this marble invitation to approach. To those who accept He gives Himself without reserve, by the hands of the priest, who takes Mary's place. Even love could do no more.

So Mary may be said to be always urging the faithful to frequent Communion. When she appeared, for example, to Bernadette at Lourdes, did she say to that little maid: "Have my image set up in this grotto, and I will scatter my favors among all who come to do me homage"? No. She ordered Bernadette to "Go and tell the priests to build a church on this spot," because in every church there is a tabernacle, and in every tabernacle the Holy Eucharist, and where the Holy Eucharist is there are communicants, for she knows that the most effective way of applying the Redemption to souls is by bringing them to Communion. Visitors at Lourdes to-day on witnessing the magnificent processions of the Blessed Sacrament, the countless Masses said in the Basilica, and the crowds of communicants who throng to the altars are sometimes at a loss as to whether Lourdes is a sanctuary of Mary or of her Divine Son. It is the shrine of both. For since that night the shepherds found Mary and her Child together the two can never be separated, and as in Bethlehem she held out her little Son to peasants and kings, so now at Lourdes she offers Him in the Holy Eucharist to both rich and poor, and makes the granting of her favors dependent

on her client's devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Those therefore, who profess to be devout to our Lady should suspect the soundness of this devotion unless it leads them to please and imitate her by going to Communion often, and every day is none too often.

Then, too, our Queen, let it be observed in conclusion, invites to her banquet not one or two guests merely, and they of high rank, and but once or twice at that, as did Queen Esther in the case of Aman and Assuerus, she urges all good Catholics, whether they be rich or poor to enjoy nearly every single day of their lives a banquet which she has prepared on such a magnificent and sumptuous scale that the Persian splendor of Queen Esther's supper seems as mean and worthless by comparison as does what is human and transitory when weighed with the everlasting and Divine. Besides, to deny and slight a queen's request, particularly such a peerless Queen as Mary, is ungracious and ill-bred. By coming daily to Holy Communion we shall make it as easy for our Queen to obtain from the King for her people whatever we need as it was for Esther, after her banquet to Assuerus, to ward off ruin from her race, because we are such frequent guests at the Queen's Banquet.

WALTER DWIGHT, S. J.

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→ The Heart of a Child ←



An incident showing the confidence and love a Catholic child feels for the Mother of God was noticed in the basement chapel of a big church, during the quiet noon hour recently. A tiny girl slipped in from the street, and, after kneeling a moment in prayer before the statue of our Lady, she mounted the step outside the sanctuary rail, dropped a coin in the box, and standing on tip toe she reached up and lit a candle in the stand near the statue. Then making a devout genuflection before the Blessed Sacrament, the little devotee went away as quietly as she had come. Beautiful and loving and holy is the heart of a child—

Holy Communion for Children.

Public or Solemn First Communion.

Continued



H! how much evil has been wrought, above all in France, by Jansenism and the Jansenistic training at home, at catechisms, in schools, and even in the confessional and the pulpit! And how bitterly we are still experiencing its effects even after the lapse of two centuries! For what, I ask, for the most part, are those First Communions made after the completion of the twelfth year, *and not before*;—and then those Second Communions, delayed till the following year, and those rare, extremely rare Communions afterwards—that is, when there are any at all—what is all this if not the natural, the inevitable fruit of rigoristic principles clung to in defiance of the sound principles taught by the Church and theology?

And if you wish to know what is more commonly the outcome of such sparing use of Communion, our experience of souls as priests enables us to answer in a few words: these poor souls inadequately fed, languid and anemic, will fall, and relapse, and sink deeper and deeper into mortal sin; they will contract habits of vice and end, it is to be feared, alas! by losing their souls. If during youth they had but realised the divine energy, the reviving efficacy that lies hid in Holy Communion, that misfortune would never have befallen them. More frequent Communion would either have rescued them from evil, or have nipped the evil in the bud.

In connection with the practice of delaying First Communion, we give ourselves the satisfaction of quoting some characteristic lines addressed to us by a worthy parish priest of Alsace: The custom of holding a Communion celebration was introduced in the days when compulsory education was adopted in Germany.

In order to compel children to receive it, the authorities made use of the clergy in order to get things arranged so that the First Communion should coincide with the completion of the school course. In Alsace, under French rule, the schools used to be open during the winter months only. The priests deferred First Communion till the age of fourteen in order to have the children under instruction for a longer period. It was not the Church that introduced the innovation. The clergy were really acting as government Police. Our fathers had but one year in which to prepare for First Communion ; and yet they were much more religious than the present generation with its five or six years of schooling and catechism.

This last piece of testimony is not at all surprising. When the practice prevailed of beginning to communicate at about ten years of age, people were virtuous, and had a good prospect of remaining so through the efficacy of the Sacrament. Whereas now that they only start Communion at fifteen, virtue has in many cases already made shipwreck, and in spite of the instructions they receive, people are forced to own : "The good which I will, I do not, but the evil which I will not, that I do . . . But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin."

The confessor should guard against certain wholly mistaken theories about the admission of children to Communion. He will hold fast to the common and true opinion, according to which children ought to be admitted between nine and ten years of age, and he will in no case wait beyond the age of twelve, because at that period a child is capable of approaching the Holy Table with the needful reverence and thoughtfulness, and, on the other hand, by that time the child is bound by the precept, and ought no longer to be deprived of the grace of so great a Sacrament. When with a little zeal one can prepare him for so great a blessing, why should the poor child be deprived through the neglect, or the false views of parish priest or confessor, who, moreover, are under an obligation to see to the business ?

It is much to be desired that parish priests, filled with the true spirit of the Church, should clearly grasp the fact that diocesan statutes only refer, have power only to refer, to the *public* and *solemn* celebration of First Communion ; and that they in no way forbid—indeed, are powerless to forbid—the administration of Holy Communion to those who are already fit for its reception. Let parish priests or rather confessors, feel no hesitation in granting Communion in the ordinary form to a considerable portion of the children before these have reached the age appointed by the Bishop for the solemn celebration. The touching and pious ceremony of First Communion need not on this account fall into disuse. It will retain all its impressiveness, in the same way that the solemn rites of Baptism are administered to infant princes who have already been baptised in private—and just as young priests not uncommonly come to sing their first high Mass in their native parish days, weeks, and even months after their ordination and first Mass.

The priest will sometimes find himself confronted by practical difficulties standing in the way of private Communion ; but is it not advisable to strive by prudent degrees to bring our customs into harmony with the full truth of divine and ecclesiastical law ? And since the jurisprudence of the Holy See opens to us a middle course to this very end, why should we not seek, with discretion, it is true, but still efficaciously, to enter the path ?

Unfortunately, it may happen that even those children who have received all the spiritual helps that the Church can give them, will not always retain the sap of grace which has been communicated to them in such special abundance. Yet, in many instances, one may notice the most unmistakable proof of the divine working of this supernatural hygiene. Ere his passions awake, let the young Christian receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation, and, in the Eucharist, let him complete his union with Our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus when the Devil comes he will find the citadel already held and fortified. Why should we fear to make a trial of it ? It is our duty to uphold the reign of Jesus

in that soul. Let us not force Him to reconquer it like some dethroned sovereign.

If there be any who are unwilling to yield to the reasons here advanced, and to the authorities quoted, and who persist in denying the duty of giving Holy Communion to children who are capable — be their age what it may we would beg them to weigh seriously the following pronouncement of the Council of Trent: "If any one shall venture to deny that all and each of the faithful of both sexes are bound, on having reached the age of discretion, to receive Communion once a year, at all events at Easter, according to the Commandment of our Holy Mother the Church: let him be anathema".

Monseigneur Isoard issued the following practical rule: "Parish priests are entitled to admit to the Easter Communion a child that has not taken part in the First Communion solemnity of the preceding year, provided it seems to satisfy all the conditions for receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist. In such a case, the child should communicate along with its parents and the other parishioners, without any ceremony to distinguish its Communion from that made by the rest of the faithful."

~ The Holy Hour ~



One hour with Thee in silent adoration,
 To taste the sweetness of Thy holy place;
 To bow my soul, in peace or desolation,
 Before the pity of Thy Sacred Face;
 The world shut out, from sin and turmoil free, —
 Only one little hour, my God, with Thee!

One hour with Thee — one short and precious hour,
 Snatched from the rush and clamor of the day;
 O gracious gift of love, O welcome shower
 Of tranquil joy, that melts my soul away;
 Making all things outside of Thee to seem
 A vain illusion, an unhappy dream!



Heart of Jesus. Son of Mary.

HOUR OF ADORATION



I. — Adoration.

“*Cor Jesu, Filii Virginis Matris, miserere nobis!*” Let us adore the Heart of the little Infant beating against the heart of His Mother, while she presses Him with joy in her tender and sheltering arms. This Infant is the true, the own Son of this Mother, formed of her blood and strengthened by her substance, born of her womb and nourished by her milk. After the Divine Sonship, which He received from His Father in eternity, nothing is truer, greater, more necessary to God and to the world, nor dearer to Jesus Himself than the human Sonship that He received in time from His Mother.

Thence spring the sacred and august relations which forever bind the Heart of this unique Son to this unique Mother. First, they are the bonds of nature: the bond of origin, which attaches the child to the mother as to the cause of its existence; the bond of blood which, flowing from the heart of the mother into that of the child, creates between them a kind of identity; and the bond of life preserved and increased by the nourishment received from the maternal bosom. Secondly, there are the moral bonds of the natural law which obliges the child to dependence upon and obedience to her who holds from the Creator the care of directing its infancy; which obliges it by gratitude toward her who, having given it life by exposing her own, surrounds it at every instant by her devoted care and solicitude. Lastly, the bonds of choice, of affection, of love, which attach the child to its mother by the qualities and virtues that it discovers in her, by their life in common, their mutual joys and sorrows, in which their hearts are dissolved in one same affection, which, by ennobling, strengthens all the other ties.

The Heart of the Infant God so much the more perfectly embraced all these sacred obligations toward His Mother, as it was to Mary alone, the unique principle of His human life, that He owed all that He had received. He loved those bonds so much the more ardently as Mary possessed in the highest degree all the qualities of the motherhood, and fulfilled its duties without faltering. It was with all the strength, all the tenderness and delight of His Heart that He loved His mother, gave Himself to her, obeyed and served her. With the same affections He still continues, and He will forever continue to serve her even in His glory, looking upon Himself as forever bound to her by the most profound filial piety. But at the moment that, formed of the blood of

His Mother, the Heart of Jesus began to be attached to her by this powerful love, the Heart of Mary, undergoing the natural law which was energized in her by the loving force of the Holy Spirit who effected her divine maternity, turned ardently to the living Fruit of her womb, gave herself up unreservedly to Him, attached herself to Him forever, and proclaimed that she was willing to become His Mother only that she might more perfectly be His servant: "*Ecce ancilla Domini!* — Behold the handmaid of the Lord!" From that moment she began to give Him, along with her maternal care, all the services of supernatural love, of religion, of adoration in spirit and in truth, of perfect praise, unreserved sacrifice, and perpetual immolation. What her Well-Beloved was to her, she was to her Well-Beloved. They were inseparably united in the same love. It made them live one in the other, and joined them in one single Heart, the Heart of Jesus and Mary: "*Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi* — My beloved to me and I to Him."

Let us, then, adore the filial piety which ceased not to dwell in the Heart of Jesus for His Mother by appropriating to ourselves all the love, all the devotedness of Mary for Jesus. This divine Mother desires that the Heart of her Son should be honored and loved. She declared it authoritatively in one of the revelations of the Sacred Heart. Blessed Margaret Mary says: "The sweet Heart of Jesus having appeared to me on a throne of flames, Its Wound radiating beams of light and heat, the Most Blessed Virgin, who was standing beside the adorable Heart, invited me in motherly words to approach. 'Come,' she said, 'draw near. I am going to make you the depository of the great Treasure which the divine Sun of Justice formed in the virginal earth of my heart, where it was hidden for nine months before being manifested to men. Behold this Divine Treasure whose tender love longs to enrich you by bestowing Itself upon you!'"

"*Cor Jesu, Filii Virginis Matris, miserere nobis!*"

Thanksgiving.

"*Cor Jesu, Filii Virginis Matris, miserere nobis!*" The generous love of the Sacred Heart in creating Mary immaculate and enriching her with all graces, in order to sanctify her and render her worthy to become His Mother, forms a new bond between the Sacred Heart and her. This unique love of the Incarnation by which He gives Himself to her as her Son is for her the plenitude of grace. Behold the infinite tenderness of His love for Mary!

This Blessed Mother, having given to Him human life that He might consecrate it to the service of His Father, the Blood with which He was to redeem the world, the faithful co-operation of prayer and devotedness in His work here on earth, the consolation of her sympathy in His sufferings, and her heroic participation in the pains of His death, a new source of love was opened in His Heart, and it constantly surged and flowed in glad waves toward

the Heart of Mary. It was the love of gratitude, that virtue so pleasing to Jesus. He rejoiced in it, gloried in it. He returned to Mary a hundredfold of happiness, glory, power in heaven and on earth for all that He had received from her. Hence, the perpetual effusion of His most magnificent gifts, blessings, thanksgivings, and praise; "*Ave, Maria, benedicta tu in mulieribus!*" Thou hast opened in my Heart an incurable wound of love, O My well-beloved! "*Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea sponsa!* — Thou hast wounded My Heart, My sister, My spouse!" "Come, come that I may crown thee in a triumph eternally renewed! — *Veni coronaberis, veni!*"

These flames of her Son's love enkindle in the Heart of Mary a sense of gratitude which becomes almost a torture, for if she herself has given anything, it was of the fruits that she had received, and what she has received will always be infinitely more than she has given. She fully understands the abundance, the price of the divine benefits. In her most pure gratitude she retains nothing for herself and, being incapable of egoism, her soul melts into thanksgiving. She is transformed into the living expression of praise, and she eternally chants to the Heart of her son her canticle of gratitude; "*Magnificat anima mea Dominum, et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo!* — My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoice in God, my Saviour!"

It is only by uniting our thanksgivings to those of Mary, in order to purify them, to enliven them with love, that our duties of thanksgiving, and they are innumerable, infinite, since we have been infinitely loved, will be pleasing to Jesus. There is only one voice that charms and captivates His Heart: "*Sonet vox tua in auribus meis, vox enim tua dulcis* — Let thy voice sound in my ears, for thy voice is sweet". There is only one voice that He still desires to hear, and that is the voice of his Mother; "*Quæ habitas in hortis, amici auscultant; fac me audire vocem tuam!* — Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the friends hearken. Make me hear thy voice!" That voice of Mary, did we know how to make it sound upon our lips, will open to us the Heart of her Son, causing inexhaustible torrents of grace to fall upon the earth.

"Once," says Blessed Margaret Mary, "my Mother made me see the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a source of living water, whence it flowed gently by five canals. . . ."
Again, she says, "This Queen of goodness, speaking to the daughters of the Visitation, said: 'Not only should they enrich themselves from this inexhaustible Treasure, but still more should they distribute Its precious coin as far as they are able. Let them give largely. Let them enrich the whole world with It, fearing not that It will ever fail, for the more they will draw from It, the more It will have to give!'"

(To be continued.)



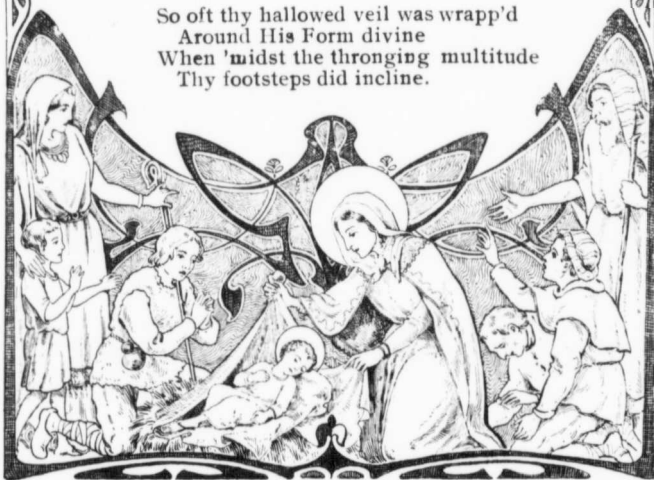
Our Lady
OF THE
Most Blessed Sacrament

Well may'st thou claim that title blest,
Dear Mother of my God.
For He was man, thy womb's chaste Fruit
Although thy King and Lord.

So oft thy snowy mantle claimed,
The corporal's holy right;
When thou didst spread it for to lay
Thy sleeping Babe in sight.

And like the priest with bended knee,
Ador'd Him as He lay
So still and placid though His might
A million worlds did sway

So oft thy hallowed veil was wrapp'd
Around His Form divine
When 'midst the thronging multitude
Thy footsteps did incline.



So priest-like was thy mission then
 While on thy breast He lay
 As now so oft He hidden lies
 While journeying on His way.

From day to day thy virgin knee
 A fitting monstrance proved,
 While throned upon thy mother lap,
 He blest the ones He loved.

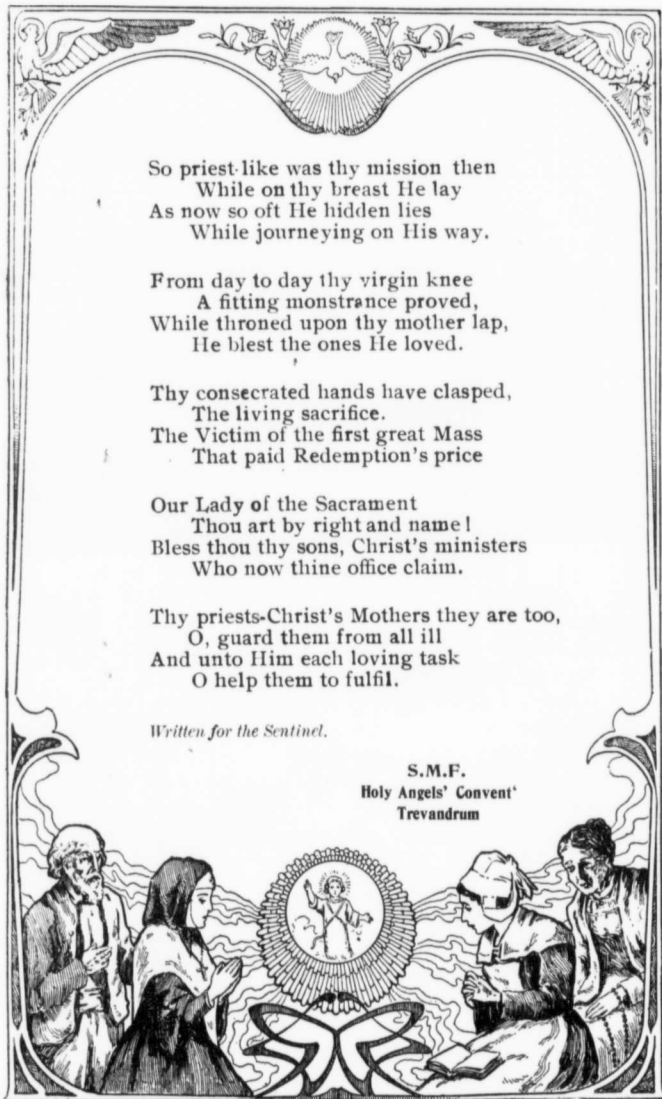
Thy consecrated hands have clasped,
 The living sacrifice.
 The Victim of the first great Mass
 That paid Redemption's price

Our Lady of the Sacrament
 Thou art by right and name !
 Bless thou thy sons, Christ's ministers
 Who now thine office claim.

Thy priests-Christ's Mothers they are too,
 O, guard them from all ill
 And unto Him each loving task
 O help them to fulfil.

Written for the Sentinel.

S.M.F.
 Holy Angels' Convent'
 Trevandrum





FATHER CARSON EXPLAINS

A dialogue on early and daily Communion for all.



(Continued)

WELL, but, Father," said Mrs. Mary. "Mrs. Manley's boys go to Communion very often since the Decree. They live in Father Healy's parish. And you should see what wild little scamps they are. Why doesn't frequent Communion have more effect on them?"

"To begin with," answered Father Carson, "your remark is based on a false supposition. Holy Communion is not a reward of virtue, to be given only to exemplary souls, nor is it a cure all, nor a violent drug, which changes everything at once. It is a divine Food, a gentle and heavenly Medicine, healing, strengthening, staying up our minds and our hearts with actual graces, and increasing the holiness of our souls. Now, we eat bodily food, even when we are ill, even when we have little appetite, because we need strength and support in our sicknesses, and we take bodily medicine to make us well, even more than to keep us so. And if the food, and the medicine do not have their effect just at once, we say: "Patience! I can't expect to get well all of a sudden!" Now, why shouldn't we think just as sensibly and practically with regard to this heavenly Food and Medicine of our souls?"

"And so—to come back to the Manley boys—even if they weren't very good children, as they are, even if they were wild and intractable and disobedient and lied

a bit, and didn't say their prayers, even then, I say (now don't be shocked,—this is good Theology) they ought to go often (with due instruction, of course, and preparation) and receive the Food and Medicine which can best build up and cure their spiritual weaknesses. Isn't that sensible, now?"

Mrs. Mary was lost in her reflections. These were new thoughts, indeed!

"And then, again," went on Father Carson, after pausing a little, "I wonder what your idea of a really good boy is? Some grown-ups have the queerest notion of what a boy should be. Do you want him to be a pale, demure little creature, who goes about with his hands always folded, and his eyes turned up to the ceiling?"

"Oh, no! of course not!" said Mrs. Mary emphatically. "I like boys to be boys, not little plaster statues, of course. But the idea of such thoughtless, lively little fellows going up to the Holy Table every morning and receiving that tremendous Sacrament, then running off and laughing and playing all day long—somehow it makes me creep."

"That is because you are full of old, ingrained, unreasonable prejudices, Mrs. Mary, as I told you before," said Father Carson. "What do you think those tiny babies did who received the Holy Communion just after they were baptized, through all those centuries during which, as I told you, infant Communion existed in the Church? Do you suppose that those little innocents acted otherwise than our modern little babies do? Of course, not. They merely swallowed the Blessed Sacrament, and then spent all the rest of the day laughing or crying or eating or sleeping or reaching after the moon. And yet they truly received the Sacrament, and so were made as surely holier. They were truly fed with the Heavenly Food, and they took it as well as babies can."

"But if it was right to give Communion to babies then, and made them holier," said Mrs. Mary, "why doesn't the Church do it still?"

"For several reasons, Mrs. Mary" answered Father Carson. "After the twelfth century, the practice gra-

dually died away. One reason, was the danger and inconvenience of giving Holy Communion as the babes received It, under the form of wine. Another was, that men came to think more upon the awful dignity of the Sacrament, and so grew to look upon it as unbecoming that anyone should receive who could not understand at all what he was about. But notice, please, there is no question of a change of belief, but only of practice or custom. We believe, now as then, that anyone who is baptized and in the state of grace and who swallows the Blessed Eucharist, receives the fruits of the Sacrament, even though he be a little child. And, if the Holy Father chose to order it so, we might begin to give Communion again to-morrow, even to babes in arms !”

“Oh, how strange that sounds every time that you say it,” said Mrs. Mary. “Communion to little babies in arms !”

“They were baptized, and they were in the state of grace,” said Father Carson. “And I tell you again, to impress it on your mind, that is all that Christ demands for a fruitfull reception of the Holy Eucharist. And He is very content, if every one prepares according as he can. Boys like boys, women like women, men like men,—each one is to prepare and to make thanksgiving in his own character, not in any one else’s. And so, if you see the Manley boys romping and playing ten minutes after Communion, don’t say to yourself : ‘Would that be becoming in me so soon after Communion ?’—but rather as : ‘Is that becoming in boys ?’—for, please remember, God does not want them to be good angels nor even good men as yet, but good, honest, whole-some boys—and it is right for a boy to romp and play. And ten minutes’ thanksgiving means as much to a boy, as half an hour or more would mean to you !”

“Well, they are very good boys, with all their noise and fun,” said Mrs. Mary, “but how inconvenient Mrs. Manley must find it to have them running off to church every morning before breakfast to go to Communion !”

"I happen to know Mrs. Manley quite well," replied Father Carson, "and I can assure you she has far less trouble now with her boys of a morning, than she used to before they began to go so often to Communion. Like a sensible woman, she changed the daily order a bit, to make it as easy as possible for them to go as often as they like. And don't you know, Mrs. Mary, what one does every day at a certain hour grows far more easy and usual than if one does it only now and then? It is truly a fact, that persons who go to Mass and Communion every day of their lives, find it easier far than those who go every week. As for those who go every month, or every year, they find it a burden, indeed. Habit, you see, makes everything light."

"That sounds all very well," said Mrs. Mary, "but how does she get all those boys up on time every morning? I have trouble enough getting Bobby awake for his breakfast and school!"

"They live five blocks from church," said Father Carson, "that takes five minutes to walk. Mass is at half past seven, and their school begins at nine. They rise at seven—and let me tell you they rise—they get up themselves, like little men, because they have an object before them. If they can't get up in time, she tells them, they are surely not very anxious to receive our Blessed Lord,—and they do get up in time! By twenty minutes past seven they are off. Mass is over at eight. They are home by a quarter past eight, and the rest is plain sailing. You see how it can be done?"

"O-o-oh! But they didn't spend *any* time in thanksgiving," said Mrs. Mary. "Why, from what you say, they must run away right after Mass."

"They do the best they can," said Father Carson. "That is all Our Lord requires. Which is better, when one is in a hurry, and hungry, too, to eat rapidly, or not to eat at all? And Holy Communion is meant to be—so our Holy Father, the Pope, and the Councils and the Fathers all assure us—the frequent and daily food of our souls. Ah, if the children can, let them stay by all means and make a longer thanksgiving. If

they can't — better far Communion without a long thanksgiving, than no Communion at all."

Mrs. Mary was silent.

"And here is another matter for you to consider, Mrs. Mary," went on Father Carson relentlessly. "Do you realize, how very far the Manley boys are getting ahead of Bobby in that inward sanctity which Holy Communion brings? Every Holy Communion, mind, worthily received, carries with it into the soul, besides all manner of actual graces, an unimaginable increase in sanctifying grace. And sanctifying grace is the pure gold of the Spirit with which we are to purchase our glory in heaven. Perhaps—mind I say *perhaps*, because God has not chosen to tell us—perhaps all the merits of all a lifetime may not gain us as great an increase of this grace as we get, through the merits of Jesus, in one Holy Communion. And here they are, those Manley boys, going day after day, month after month, and doubling and trebling the store of grace in their souls, while poor little Bobby—because his good mother won't listen to our Holy Father the Pope—has never made his First Communion at all, and so has to be satisfied with only that amount of the gold of sanctifying grace which his own poor little actions can bring him."

"Oh stop!—please do! You make me feel dreadfully jealous and envious and all" cried Mrs. Mary. "There! I give up! Bobby shall make his First Communion as soon as ever he can, and shall go every day of his life, if his mother can make him!"

"Now not too fast either," said Father Carson, with a ghost of his former smile. "Bobby musn't be ordered, nor driven to go. But if you make him feel, in the way that mothers know, how good it is for him to go often, and how it will please our dear Lord and you, he will take to it gladly enough. Do you think a child cannot be made to understand what a great grace Holy Communion is? Only try it, and see. But use clear and true and easily understood arguments which will appeal to his mind, and if he does not wish to go, on this morning or that, and has some good reason, then leave him quite free. No bullying, mind!"

(to be continued)

OUR LADY'S LILY

A TRUE STORY.



INE years ago Miss Ormonde went to Vienna as governess to Shura Raminoff, the only child of a very wealthy Russian banker ; as madame his wife was a great invalid, Shura spent most of her time with her nurse, a Russian peasant named Katherinka, or with her governess. Mr. Raminoff, though an atheist, had a most chivalrous respect for the Blessed Virgin; madame was a Jewess ; while Katherinka belonged to the Greek Church and had a wonderful love for God's Holy Mother. This love she planted in Shura's little heart—every night the child would kiss the picture of the Madonna that hung in her nurse's room and speak to it in a sweet, confiding way. Seeing how she loved the shabby print, her father, who travelled much, brought from Florence an exquisite little painting of our Blessed Mother. This was the one thing Shura valued. She was happy when she had it, miserable without it.

"When Miss Ormonde first saw her she was only six, but tall for that age, very slight and graceful, with beautiful dark eyes that lighted up wonderfully when pleasure or anger kindled the fire in their depths. The long golden hair fell in curls, framing a face fair as an angel's. But Shura could be very wilful when she liked, and in the beginning Miss Ormonde found her post a trying one. But the child soon learned to love her, and called her "Missie," a name of her own inventing.

"One day she had been particularly naughty, and as Katherinka was ill, the poor governess had to look after her from morning till night. At last bed-time came—Shura was snugly tucked into her cot, quiet and

silent. Suddenly she began to sob, 'Oh, I can't kiss her ; I have been bad all day. I can't kiss her.'

"Thinking the child cried because she had not been allowed to say 'Good-night' to her mother, who was very weakly, Miss Ormonde tried to comfort her, but Shura only sobbed the more and said :

" 'It's not mamma at all ; it's *My Lady*. Katherinka said I must not kiss her picture when I was naughty. And now I can't ask her to bring her Baby to me when I'm asleep. But perhaps you don't know *My Lady* ?'

" 'Yes, dear ; I know and love her. In my country we call her Mother Mary. Shura, listen to me now. You are surely sorry you were so naughty ?'

" 'Indeed, indeed, I am,' was the quick reply, as the child impulsively threw her arms round her governess's neck, 'and please do forgive me.'

" 'Yes, but won't you tell the Madonna that also ? That is right, dear. Now, you may kiss her picture. Lie down—just so and be a good little girl to-morrow.'

" 'But do you think *She* will bring me her Baby to-night ?' whispered Shura wistfully. 'You don't understand ? Well, it's just this ; Katherinka said *My Lady* comes at night to good children that love her. They don't see her, for they are asleep, but she just holds down her Baby close to them that He may kiss them, and that's why good little girls and boys smile while they sleep. Will she bring Him to me to-night, Miss ?'

" 'Ask her, Shura, but now go to sleep. I will stay with you and say my beads.'

"Soon the regular breathing told that the child slept, but Miss Ormonde stayed beside her, praying that God would guard from evil the heart that had been so wonderfully revealed to her. She now had the key to that wild, impulsive nature, where love and faith were already at work. What would the future bring ?

"From Vienna the Raminoffs moved to Meran, that charming health resort in the Tyrol. The town lies under the shadow of the great Kùchelsberg, robed in the evergreen of pines, which rises sheer and steep from the sheltered valley. Many an excursion did Miss Ormonde and her charge make up the mountain,

but one spot had a special interest for Shura— a vine-covered, wayside shrine of Jesus Crucified, which stands a little off the road to Schloss Tirol. The face that looked down was eloquent of love and pity. To Shura it appealed not in vain. She was just tall enough to reach up to the nail-pierced feet, and her tears often bedewed them. The beautiful brown eyes were sad indeed as she would say :

“ ‘O Jesus, pity me, I am a little Jewess. Can you love me ?’

“Then gathering the bright-colored wild flowers, she would weave garlands and twine them round the cruel nails, saying the while :

“ ‘I would pull them out if I could.’

“Up among the vineyards is the Church of St. Valentine, another favorite spot of Shura's. There she learned the ‘Our Father’ and ‘Hail Mary,’ as the peasants prayed aloud when they knelt for a moment before the altar. But these prayers got the child into many a scrape. Madame was very angry ; she blamed poor Katherinka, stormed at Shura, forbade the governess to teach her ‘*such charms*,’ but quietly and perseveringly the little lover of Mary said her prayers morning and evening.

“From Meran to Florence madame next went. Mr. Raminoff saw them comfortably settled in the ‘Lung’ Arno, that most fashionable of resorts. Florence, the Fair, delighted the little Jewess, who, young as she was, appreciated the beauties of nature. The city is framed by the chain of the Apennines and the mountains of Casentino and Vallombrosa, where olive trees and cypress groves, spreading chestnuts and apple orchards, gardens of vines and roses run riot on the foothills. Her father wished Shura to visit the churches, gave her permission to accompany Miss Ormonde to Mass on Sundays - in fact, he cared not what the child believed, provided she became a good, well educated, cultured woman. As to madame, day by day her health was failing, and the governess was given complete care of her little charge.

“Of all Florence's beautiful churches, that of *Santa Maria del Fiore* was Shura's favorite. The mosaic pa-

vement, with its perfect design of lilies, was to her a never-ending wonder. One day while gazing at it she said, so quaintly :

“ ‘Missie, I don't want to get big, for if I do My Lady won't bring me the Baby Jesus when I sleep, but I want to go to her soon, to be always little, and to scatter lilies just like these round her throne in Heaven. But I must be a Catholic to go there, and you know mamma won't let me. Katherinka says God can do every-thing. I suppose He can settle about me'.

“ When Florence looked its loveliest in the sweet month of May, the Raminoffs moved to Monte Carlo. In the little church of *Sainte Dévote*, Shura for the first time was present at Benediction ; she went every evening, but ere May was ended the family once more sought another health resort. June at its close found the travellers in Odessa, whence they sailed for Batum, on the southwestern shore of the Black Sea.

“ In the July of 1905 a revolutionary outbreak startled Russia. The fleet sided with the insurgents, and the Raminoffs returned to Odessa, that large, well-kept port in which Mr. Raminoff's principal banks were. In September the mutinous fleet entered the harbor and the bombardment began. Shells fell on every side ; a perfect panic seized the inhabitants, most of whom sought safety in flight. Mr. Raminoff would not desert the town in its hour of need, but he arranged for the flight of madame, Shura, Miss Ormonde and a few trusted servants. By night the little party left the Raminoff mansion and proceeded by lanes and back streets to the railway station. In the principal thoroughfares fighting was going on, the assailants fiercely attacking the barricades. Madame was wild with terror, but Shura, who was carried by a manservant, was very still ; her eyes were closed, and her little hands clutched firmly a small parcel. Thinking she was frightened, her governess spoke cheering words, but the only answer was :

“ ‘No, Missie, I do not fear ; I am speaking to My Lady. See, I have brought her picture. She will take care of us.'

“In truth our Blessed Mother did, for the only train that crossed the fighting lines in safety was that in which the child that loved Mary travelled. Shells burst over them, bombs were on the lines, but God’s Mother was their guide, their protectress. They reached Vienna, whence they left for Meran, and in December settled again in Monte Carlo. Shura there



commenced a course of Hebrew lessons. On December 8th, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, there were special devotions in the little church of *Sainte Dévote*. Unfortunately, the hour fixed was noon, when the little Jewess was at her new study. Miss Ormonde went alone : on her return she found the child lying on a sofa, sobbing bitterly. Quite alarmed, she hastened to learn the cause of her grief.

“ ‘How could you, Missie ? How could you leave me here ? I wanted the blessing of Jesus, all day I longed for it ; now it’s over. How could you ?’

“ The only thing that comforted her was the promise that she should often visit the parish church at Christmas and see the beautiful Crib there.

“ Shura at once decided to have a gift to offer, and determined to save every sou, every franc ; she would bring all to the Crib ; the priest in charge would know best what the little Jesus would like.

“ Christmas eve came. It was bed time, but sleep was long in coming, for the thought of Bethlehem filled the child’s soul, but at last the lovely dark eyes were closed, and a wonderful dream was hers. In very joy she awoke, and dressing hastily, entered Miss Ormonde’s room, bent over her and whispered :

“ ‘Please do wake, Missie ; I have seen *Him*. My Lady brought Him and put Him in my arms, and said, “Kiss Him, little Flower of Israel. Love Him all you can, for soon He will come to take you home.” Oh ! I have seen Him.’

“ There was something marvelous in the child’s appearance : truth and purity shone in her eyes and a joy not of earth transfigured her. Often afterwards her governess recalled the wonderful story of that morning. The picture of that eager, happy face never left her memory.

“ In February they started for Switzerland, as madame was ordered to a sanatorium at Bois Cerf, near Lausanne. It was a large place, and nuns of the Order of the Holy Trinity had charge of it. The four months spent there were the happiest term in Shura’s short life. As she never had a settled home, she had had no playmates, but at Bois Cerf, there were plenty of little boys and girls, and many a romp they had in the court ; they had sleighing and skating and snow balling, and every day brought new pleasures to the would-be little Christian.

‘As it was Lent when they arrived, there were evening devotions, and the child went early to the church, to secure a seat in the front bench.

“ ‘I want to see Jesus well,’ she would say.

"On Easter Sunday the Rev. Mother gave her a small silver crucifix and a beautiful medal of our Lady. No words could tell the joy these gifts brought. Shura fastened them to a ribbon, which she tied round her neck and never took off except when she went out to drive with her mother, for well the child knew that madame would not approve her treasures.

"One lovely May afternoon as Shura and her governess returned from Lausanne, whither they had accompanied Mr. Raminoff, who was returning to Russia, they rested for a while in the great wood that girds the mountain overhanging the town. Wild hyacinths and sweet, fragrant cyclamen, our Lady's own blossom, raised their delicate petals from banks of ferns and gold-tipped moss. Here were treasures indeed for the May altar, and as they both gathered the scented flowers Shura suddenly asked : 'Missie, dear, if I died now, while I'm little, do you think Jesus would take me to Heaven ?'

"'I am sure our Lord will take you to His beautiful home some day, but you must love Him always.'

"'Of course I'll love Him. Won't His great feast be kept soon ? Yesterday while I played with Yvonne and Pauline they told me *Fête Dieu* would be kept in June.'

"'Yes, it will be June 14th. Perhaps, Shura, the Rev. Mother may allow you to scatter flowers before our Lord in the procession.'

"How little they both dreamed what was to happen that day ! On the eve of the feast there was a Flower Show in Geneva. Madame, though far from well, insisted on going there, and took with her Miss Ormonde and Shura. They would return on the morrow. Fearing to lose Mass, the governess went out early to the Church of the Sacred Heart, and madame refused to allow the child to accompany her ; but one thought consoled Shura : she would be back at the convent in time for the procession. Rev. Mother had promised to have her basket of roses ready.

"On returning to the hotel, Miss Ormonde found the hall a scene of strange excitement. Doctors, nurses, maids, porters, everyone seemed to have assembled there.

“ ‘How did it happen?’ ‘Is she really dead?’ Is there no hope?’

“In French, German and English these questions were asked. In a moment the proprietor was at Miss Ormonde's side explaining that madame had been killed in a terrible lift accident, and little mademoiselle was very badly injured. He led the way to a room upstairs where she lay, still and white, the long, black lashes forming a perfect fringe on the face, pure as a lily. She was quite unconscious. The skull bone was fractured and the pressure on the brain must be relieved, but the doctors had little hope. She might recover consciousness, but she could not live long.

“A telegram summoned Mr. Raminoff from Odessa, but it would be days before he could arrive in Geneva, and meanwhile Miss Ormonde had baptized Shura. Once, like a flashlight, the torch of reason flickered for a moment, the great, dark eyes opened and smiled a look of recognition as her governess bent over her. The little hands sought for the precious crucifix. It was not there. Then she remembered, and in broken words told where she had left it the previous day in Bois Cerf. Ere the morrow's sun had set it was resting on the innocent heart that loved with so true and strong a love.

“On July 7th, 1906, Shura Raminoff left earth for Heaven, where she now scatters round the throne of our Lady the lilies that bloom but in pure hearts. She was laid to rest in the Jewish cemetery at Geneva—the one little Christian there, whose Requiem is chanted by the ceaseless ebb and flow of the silver lake from whose shores her soul soared Heavenwards.

“But, children, dear, there goes the bell for Benediction. I am sure you will all pray that you may love Jesus and His blessed Mother with a love something like that of our Lady's Lily, little Shura Raminoff.”

SR. M. GONZAGA.

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