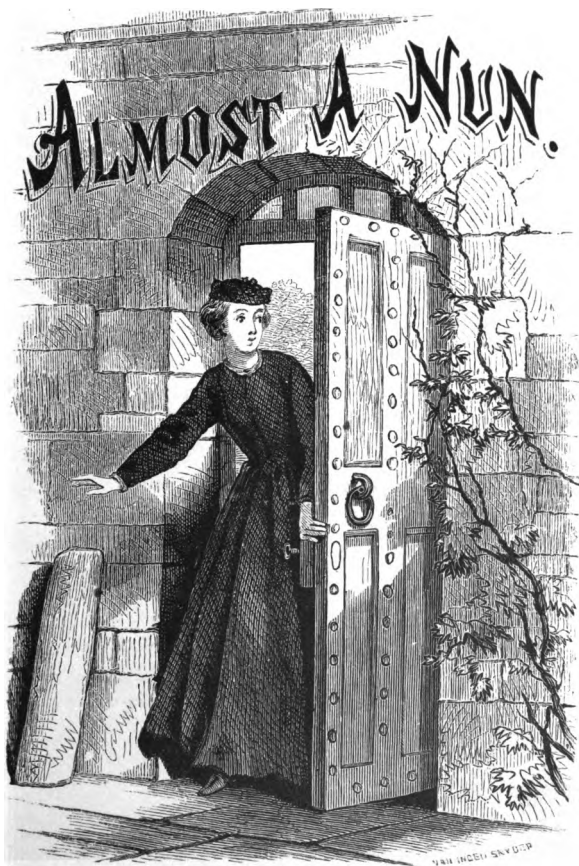




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ALMOST A NUN.

BY

MRS. JULIA MCNAIR WRIGHT.

AUTHOR OF

"SEVEN BINDERS OF NEW YORK," "NEW YORK NEEDLE
WOMAN," "GOLDEN LIFE," &c., &c.

"That from these may grow
An hundredfold, who, having learned the way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe." MILTON.

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PREFACE.

Esop opposed by fable the faults and follies of his time. While I can neither preach nor argue, I can tell you this simple story, hoping that it will stir up many who are, unhappily, lukewarm Protestants, to an earnestness of zeal for that faith, pure and undefiled, for which the martyrs witnessed a good confession, and "loved not their lives to the death." Those who stoutly maintain their own Protestantism, too often make their children over to Rome, by sending their impressible hearts and minds to be moulded by Romish priests and sisters. Even those in whose veins flow the blood of Covenanters and Huguenots, aping those old-time sinners who cast their children into the fire of Molech, cast their sons and daughters into the fast embrace of Babylon—doomed of old "to come up in remembrance before God, to taste of the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."

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Of this story I can only say, "the half has not been told." Who of these things can tell the truth in a readable book? My story is composed almost entirely of *fact*. *All the leading incidents are sober truths*; my characters are not children of fancy, but the people of to-day. I would that the book might have a mission, to awaken a deeper sense of their responsibility in all Protestants, and to call them to protest in speech and practice against this worst form of idolatry—idolatry subtle and fascinating, and working the works of darkness under the full blaze of revelation.

That glorious Song of Moses and the Lamb is sung by those "who have gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name."

J. McN. W.



ALMOST A NUN.

CHAPTER I.

ONE of the longest and hottest of July days was drawing to its close. From early morning, heat and dust had held empire in the streets of ———, and few were to be seen on the scorching pavements but those whom necessity had forced from retirement. Horses went wearily along, flecked with foam, and the sons of toil ever and anon lifted their broad straw hats to wipe the sweat of labor from their flushed faces. But as the day wore on a cooling breeze sprang up, the houses cast long shadows, and men, taking courage, looked forward to the calm and pleasant evening

Along the shady side of one of those streets devoted almost exclusively to handsome residences walked a youthful woman, with easy, graceful step: in her white hat and floating muslin garb she was a vision sweet and refreshing as a June night star-crowned, or a cluster of white lilies. Her walk ended at a short flight of marble steps, and closing the parasol she had been idly carrying open in her hand, she entered a portico paved with blocks of black and white marble. The heavy outer doors were wide open; the inner one, composed of stained glass set in highly polished panels, was closed. On either side of the portico stood a tall white vase; in one grew a cypress vine, now covered with blossoms, the long, fragile sprays running riot over the side of the vase, and dropping even to the floor. The opposite vase held a Canary creeper, which vied with its neighbor in the luxuriance of its growth and the profusion of its golden flowers.

A slight flush of heat and fatigue had mounted to the lady's cheek, and she paused a moment in the portico to rest. Breaking a spray from each

of the blooming vines, she twined them together, moving here a leaf and there artistically contrasting a blossom, until, satisfied with her work, she opened the door and entered the wide and darkened hall. As the lady entered the hall a figure totally different from her own appeared descending the staircase. This was a tall and slender man, with a scholarly face, and white hair fringing his shaven crown and falling to his shoulders on either side of his head. His brow was broad and high, his features sharply defined; and, in strange contrast to his blanched locks and many wrinkles, gleamed out from under his frosty lashes eyes full of all the fire and unrest of youth. He was different from the generality of men in dress, for he wore the flowing black robes of a Romish priest. The priest and the lady met at the foot of the stairs unexpectedly to both, for the tread of each was noiseless, and the one was absorbed in his meditations, and the other was blinded by the transition from the glare of the street to the twilight of the hall.

"Mrs. Rebyrn," said the priest, with a courtly

salutation, yet resting his hand on the balluster, and remaining standing on the lower step, without permitting her to pass.

"Mr. Munot," said the lady, bowing.

"I trust you are well, daughter."

"Thank you, father."

"You are going to see Mrs. Marvin?"

Mrs. Reyburn bowed coldly, and made a motion as if she would pass up the staircase, but still her companion held his place in her way.

"Would it not be well to leave such an invalid *entirely* to her *relatives*?" asked the priest, gently.

"A friendship so long as ours," replied Mrs. Reyburn, "has a bond like that of blood."

"And yet that friendship must soon find its end. Why not anticipate that end by a few days, and leave our dying sister with her attendants and the consolations of religion?"

"Permit me to pass, Father Munot," said the lady, the swift blood tinging her cheek and her eye brightening though her voice preserved its even tone.

"I think that just now your presence may be inopportune in the sick room."

"Courteous falsehoods have never passed current between Virginia Marvin and myself," said Mrs. Reyburn firmly: "if my presence is undesired, I shall soon be so informed."

"But," urged the priest, "the sick seldom realize what is for their good or injury."

"Her nurse and physician shall be judges, and doubtless competent ones. Be kind enough to permit me to pass up stairs.

"A short conversation with you, Mrs. Reyburn, would afford me much pleasure. This parlor is vacant; can you spare me a few moments?" and the priest opened the door of a small parlor, once the favorite morning-room of the mistress of this establishment.

Mrs. Reyburn followed the old man into the room, and sank into the low rocking-chair he moved forward for her accommodation, striving to repress the exhibition of the vexation she really felt.

"Your family are not unknown to me, Mrs.

Reyburn," said the priest, seating himself on the end of an adjacent sofa, "and I may say you, also, are not unknown; I met you frequently as a child at your father's house. Your father, madam, was one of whom I had great hopes."

"My father," replied Mrs. Reyburn, "indulged a laxity of religious opinion which I have ever regretted. His theory was that it mattered little *what* a man believes, so that he was sincere in his belief—a view which Scripture plainly controverts in this passage: 'As a man thinketh, so is he:' if he thinks wrongly, he *is* wrong, even though he *imagines* himself right."

"I accept your interpretation of that passage," said the priest bowing; "and yet you will permit me to caution you against putting your own constructions on the sacred text, lest you be of those unlearned who wrest it to their own destruction."

To this sally Mrs. Reyburn made no reply, save the faint shadow of a smile that swept one instant across her mobile features, and was gone. Of biblical attainments unquestionably far in ad-

vance of Father Munot, his hint came to her as bordering on the ridiculous. Mr. Munot pursued the conversation in a low, winning tone:

"We may differ as to what a man is bound to believe, and what only is a true belief. Your father, unlike many in this bigoted America, was liberal to our church when he sold us land, and made me a handsome contribution for a magnificent stained glass window for the Church of the Holy Virgin. I had hoped his good deeds would meet their reward in the conversion of his only child, and that you might be a daughter of the true Church."

"I humbly trust," replied Mrs. Reyburn, "that I am a daughter of the King of kings."

"It has struck me as singular," replied the priest, in his soft, winning tones, "that *women* should hold themselves aloof from that Church which alone offers to *women* such a tender, sympathizing friend as the Holy Mother of Christ."

"It has struck *me* as singular," returned Mrs. Reyburn, promptly, "that any woman in the pos-

session of even the commonest reasoning faculties should ever trust to a religion that thrusts a sister woman between herself and her God—that bids her trust the safety of her soul to any other name than that of Christ, when Scripture so plainly tells us that there is no other name given under heaven whereby we may be saved.”

A flash of angry fire blazed for one moment in the priest's eyes, and a bitter smile curled his lip; then, mastering his emotion, he said, coolly:

“Suspicion and misrepresentation are all we Catholics have learned to expect, and as you are married to a setter-forth of a doctrine so opposed to ours, you are doubtless well schooled in attacks upon us. But, my daughter, if, in spite of all this, you can be won to the true fold, all the greater will be our honor. I do not despair of you.”

“It is singular that you should attack a faith now strong and matured by years of study, when, even as a child, I proved so intractable,” replied Mrs. Reyburn, a merry smile filling her eyes, for, in earlier years, she had met the rev-

erend father's efforts at proselyting with many a childish repartee and apt reply.

The priest arose: "At a future day, Mrs Reyburn, I trust to resume this conversation."

"Religious controversies," the lady made answer, "cannot be profitable to you, and are to me distasteful. If you desire to argue, Father Munot, seek a Protestant clergyman; but if proselyting is your aim, I am, I fear, a hopeless subject."

Mr. Munot had risen, and was evidently angry, but, preserving a calm voice, he said, "Your visits to Mr Marvin are unpleasant to her husband's family, who, as you know, are her only relatives. It would be wise for you to refrain from disturbing the family harmony, and as a friend to Mrs. Marvin you should avoid injuring her health by the excitement of your conversation. I hope, Mrs. Reyburn, that the cautions and advice of an old man who was your father's friend, and is willing to be yours, will be accepted in a kindly spirit." Thus speaking, with one of those elegant salutations

in which he was unrivaled, Father Minot left the room.

Mrs. Reyburn picked up a fan from a table at her side, and gently swaying it, gave a swift mental review to the conversation with the priest. The little parlor where she sat was separated by folding doors from a larger room, whence came the sound of two voices. Mrs. Marvin's nurse and sister-in-law were speaking together, but unnoticed by Mrs. Reyburn, until, coming out of a reverie with the half-uttered exclamation, "Oh these Jesuits!" she added, catching the tones of Mrs. Duval, "There is another of them! That woman has a stealthy step and a velvety hand, but, like a cat's paw, it has sheathed claws." In reply to Mrs. Duval, Mrs. Marvin's nurse spoke.

"If Mrs. Marvin does not want my services, I 'ope she'll 'ave no 'esitation hin saying so."

"Mrs. Marvin is nervous and feeble, and her dissatisfaction arises solely from her own feeble state, which prevents anything from suiting her; yit we must humor her now, I suppose."

"Of course," said the nurse, with asperity, "I 'ave no desire to stay where I h'am not wanted."

"I know," proceeded Mrs. Duval, "that you can obtain plenty of places where your services will be valued as they deserve; and we should do ourselves the pleasure of making you a handsome present in consideration of these peculiar circumstances."

"'Andsome treatment is better than presents," said the nurse, bitterly. "Mrs Marvin 'as always treated me well, but if she is tired of me, let her speak the word."

"That, being weak and nervous, she will not."

"Then I'll speak it for her," said the nurse, tartly.

"Do not, Mrs. Rose, seem vexed, or refer to what I have mentioned to you of her dissatisfaction. I fear excitement would injure her."

"I 'ope I know my duty," said Mrs. Rose, "I shall not excite her. I'm h'afraid she'll not find another to nurse her like I do. I know what nursing is, if I do say it."

"There are few like you," began Mrs. Duval, in a soothing tone; but just then Mrs. Reyburn recollected herself, and starting up, feeling like an intruder on the conversation—which, indeed, she had heard with intense interest—she went up to her friend's room, saying to herself: "There! they are trying to get Mrs. Rose away, because she is a Protestant!" As this conviction fixed itself upon her mind, she entered a large front chamber, Mrs. Marvin's sick-room.

The room was furnished with all that wealth could purchase to provide for the comfort or please the taste of its occupant. On a low couch near the front windows lay Mrs. Marvin, a woman of thirty-four, on whose white brow and hectic cheek were the fatal imprints of that scourge of our land—consumption. Her light hair was brushed back from her face in silken waves; a blue wrapper with white trimmings fell in soft folds about her reclining figure; and her small, wasted hands were loosely clasped together in an attitude betokening weariness and also pain.

Full of the thoughts that the conversation between the nurse and Mrs. Duval had awakened, Mrs. Reyburn's first words were, as she bent over her friend, "And how is Mrs. Rose taking care of you to-day, my dear?"

"Skillfully as ever," replied Mrs. Marvin.

"A good nurse, is she not?"

"Most excellent."

"And how fortunate it is that she can remain with you!"

"It is a matter to be thankful for; and I have often praised Him from whom comes every good gift that such a kind and faithful nurse has been provided for me."

Mrs. Reyburn had taken a low seat near her friend; and now, satisfied regarding the nurse, she took one of the invalid's hands in her own, saying lightly, "Your hand is too hot, Virginia, your pulse too fast, your cheeks have more flush than usual, and your eyes show excitement. Really, my dear, I hope you have not been partaking too freely of the doctor's stimulants or exciting yourself over a novel?"

Mrs. Marvin did not reply by a smile to the absurd remarks with which her younger friend was wont to try to rouse her from fits of gloom, into which, musing on various subjects of anxiety frequently cast her. On the contrary, a large tear rolled slowly down her cheek as she replied:

"To-day, Grace, I am suffering for forgetting my Creator in the days of my youth."

"Virginia," said Mrs. Reyburn, earnestly, "turn your eyes from the past and fix them on Christ. He has taken the burden of all your sins and shortcomings; now, for you, it remains to forget those things which are behind, and press on to those which are before."

"Sin," replied Mrs. Marvin, "brings its own punishment. There are certain troubles pressing upon me now from which I should have been free had I earlier remembered my duty to my God. Had I been a firm Protestant and a true Christian, I should not have married into a Catholic family, and so my last hours had been free from persistent attacks

upon a faith that is now far dearer than my life. I should also have been free from the dreadful certainty that these attacks will be renewed against my child when I am dist; and much I fear that her young mind will be deluded by the sophistries of the Romish faith."

"I understand you," said Mrs. Reyburn: "you have been favored with a visit from Father Munot."

"With many a visit—he comes as frequently as my own pastor. Indeed, Grace, I fear my pastor is deserting me; he has not been here for a fortnight."

"Mr. Bradford not been here for a fortnight?"

"No, and he always used to come twice a week."

Mrs. Reyburn looked first perplexed, and then displeased, and her friend continued:

"My sisters-in-law and mother Marvin ply me with unceasing arguments and importunities. Not only are they increasing my disease by their

constant solicitations, but I fear that when I am dead they will assert that I died a Catholic, and have me buried with all the ceremonies of their Church—a course which, while it could not injure *me*, would have a very bad effect on my child. And yet, Grace, they are so very tender and loving, and show so much anxiety for what they call my own interest, that I cannot command them to be silent.”

“Arm yourself, my dear friend, against this very tenderness. What you yield now may ruin your child; set yourself to defend her now and hereafter from this proselyting spirit of the Romish Church. Let no love and gratitude to your relatives tempt you to do *her* injustice. You have already selected for her Protestant guardians, and committed her and her fortune entirely to their keeping?”

“Yes, that was done some time ago.”

“Send for your lawyer, and leave a written order for him to take the arrangements for your burial entirely into his own hands, and to have it strictly Protestant. As to reports of a dying

conversion to the Romish Church, I doubt not both your nurse and myself will be permitted to bear witness to your constancy in the hour of death to that precious Protestant faith wherein you now stand."

Mrs. Marvin's face grew brighter at her friend's earnest words. "But my Elleanore—" she said presently.

"You have power in prayer," replied Mrs. Marvin, "with that Arm that moves the world. You have entrusted your child to a covenant-keeping God, and doubt not he is able and willing to keep that trust until the day for which all other days are made."

"You are a good comforter," said Mrs. Marvin, pressing her friend's hand. As she spoke, Mrs. Rose entered the room and busied herself for a few moments in little duties, her nervous manner and the disturbance of her whole countenance betokening an excitement that only the preoccupation of Mrs. Marvin prevented her from noticing.

Mrs. Reyburn saw the excitement and knew

its cause; and began to consider how she should quiet the nurse and yet not disturb the invalid

Mrs. Rose was an English woman—a very faithful, gentle and skillful nurse, but of quick temper and a keen sense of justice. The patience of Mrs. Marvin through a long and painful illness, her gentleness, liberality and beauty, had aroused for her in Mrs. Rose's heart a feeling of devoted love; and now to find this affection rewarded by dislike, that Mrs. Marvin had grown weary of her zealous service and was annoyed by her presence, was more than the good woman could bear. Day and night, untiringly and uncomplainingly, had Mrs. Rose performed her arduous duties, and to have become an object of dislike to her whom she served was bitter indeed. These feelings rapidly getting beyond her control, she said in a faltering tone, "Mrs. Marvin, I would like to say to you—"

"And oh Mrs. Rose!" exclaimed Mrs. Reyburn, "I would like to say something to

you, and I am not going to let Mrs. Marvin hear one word of it. Now, Virginia, my dear, Mrs. Rose and I are going to have a little talk in the library; so repress your curiosity, for it will do no good."

And laying her hand on the nurse's arm, she drew her from the room before she could utter a word.

"Now, Mrs. Rose," said Mrs. Reyburn, when the two were comfortably seated in the library, "I know what you were about to say to Mrs. Marvin, for, most happily, I heard a part of the conversation you had with Mrs. Duval."

"Mrs. Duval told me," said Mrs. Rose, "that Mrs. Marvin was not suited with me, and wanted to change; and I'm sure she's welcome to do it. I don't want to stay, I assure you."

"I thought you were really fond of your patient," said Mrs. Reyburn, reproachfully.

"So I was until I found she disliked me—yes, and so I am now," she added earnestly—"but I won't stay when she don't want to 'ave me."

"Mrs. Ræse," said Mrs. Reyburn, earnestly, "put all these thoughts out of your mind. It is not half an hour since Mrs. Marvin told me that she thanked the Lord for giving her such a nurse as yourself, and that no one could be better or more acceptable to her. Let this soothe your feelings, and listen while I tell you a little history. I will sit near you and speak softly, for I believe every door in this house has ears:

"Mrs. Marvin and myself have been friends from childhood, though she is some five years my senior. She was an orphan and living with an aunt in a house adjoining my father's, and, as I was an only child, she took for me the place of an elder sister. Her aunt, nominally a Protestant, had really no religion: herself and Virginia were her idols. Virginia was but little more than seventeen when she married Mr. Marvin, an agreeable and wealthy man, considerably older than herself. His family were earnest Roman Catholics, but, like many others, he had become disgusted with his own creed without accepting another. They were married by a

Protestant clergyman, Virginia's aunt making all the arrangements for the wedding to suit herself.

"In the year after the marriage, Elleanore was born and Virginia's aunt died, leaving her property to her niece. In two years more Mr. Marvin was suddenly killed by a fall, and left his wife sole guardian of their child and property. This great loss was the means of awakening Mrs. Marvin from her spiritual indifference and turning her heart to the God of her fathers. She had her husband buried by a Protestant minister in a Protestant burial-ground, and has never allowed one penny of his fortune to go to the Romish Church. This so incensed his family that for several years they did not even speak to her. At last, some slight intercourse was resumed, and Mrs. Marvin, having a severe illness of several months' duration, her relatives were very tender and attentive. At the beginning of this illness, Elleanore's Protestant nurse-girl left her very suddenly and Mrs. Duval procured a girl in her

place. When Mrs. Marvin recovered sufficiently to resume the charge of her child, she found that Elleanore had been frequently taken to the Catholic church, wore a crucifix, and added the 'Hail Mary' to her prayers; while her new nurse, a strong Papist, continually filled her infant mind with the vain legends of the Romish faith. The girl was discharged, and Mrs. Marvin found her former nurse, who said she had been dismissed by Mrs. Duval in Mrs. Marvin's name. This girl, however, returned and remained as long as Elleanore had need of such an attendant. Mrs. Duval is now trying with you the same scheme which she found to succeed with the child's maid."

"But," said Mrs. Rose, "I shouldn't think a *lady* would tell me a downright falsehood."

"Mrs. Rose, 'no faith with a Protestant' is a cardinal point with Papists. A lie told to a Protestant is no lie; the end justifies the means used to attain the end; the lie rises to a virtue if told to aid the Romish Church. I doubt not that, like Paul, when persecuting the saints,

Mrs. Duval verily thought she did God service."

"But what does she mean by it all?"

'She means to get Elleanore's property, and Elleanore herself, into the Roman Catholic Church.

"After the affair I have just mentioned, there was another interval of coldness on the part of the Marvin family, and then they began to be very kind to Elleanore, and to make her many presents. Mrs. Marvin was pleased at this until among the gifts came a missal, a pearl crucifix and a really beautiful picture of the Madonna. These Mrs. Marvin returned, and again the family were angry until the beginning of this present illness. To-day Mrs. Marvin spoke of you in the highest terms, and I know she would be greatly distressed if you left her. Do not suffer yourself to be imposed upon. If you leave her, you leave her defenceless in the hands of a Catholic nurse, who will annoy her last hours, and say what she pleases after Mrs. Marvin's death."

"If I could 'ear 'er own opinion from 'er own lips," said Mrs. Rose, quite excited, "I'd be content."

"Come, then, and you shall," said Mrs. Reyburn.

Returning with the nurse to Mrs. Marvin's room, Mrs. Reyburn said, bending over her friend,

"Virginia, Mrs. Duval has been making Mrs. Rose think you are dissatisfied with her; will you tell her what you really feel?"

Mrs. Marvin held out her hand to her nurse. "Mrs. Rose," she said, gently, "there could never be a more faithful nurse than you are to me, nor one I could more esteem: promise me that you will stay as long as I live."

"They may say what they please," cried Mrs. Rose, with energy, "they sha'n't get me to go. I'll stay, Mrs. Marvin, dear, twenty years before I leave you to them."

"Now, my dear, go to sleep. Be sure the Lord is guarding both you and your child, and will not suffer you to be harmed."

So saying, Mrs. Reyburn kissed her friend good-bye and left the room.

During the time passed at Mrs. Marvin's, the streets had become much cooler, the shadows were longer, the sidewalks were filled with promenaders, windows were thrown open, children had ventured into the parks, and in the pleasant stir that was abroad Mrs. Reyburn found relief from her anxious thoughts about her friend. As she walked slowly along, she heard her name called in a familiar voice. She was passing the house of her family physician, Doctor Grant, and looking up, saw the old gentleman sitting in the window of his office.

"Come in a moment," he said; "I want to see you."

The doctor was Mrs. Marvin's medical adviser, and Mrs. Reyburn, glad of an opportunity to see him about her friend, went into the office. The old man drew a chair for her near his side, and, as she sat down, said,

"I have just been honored with a call from Father Munot."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Mrs. Reyburn.

"He came," said the doctor, with a quizzical twinkle in his eyes, "as a friend of Mrs. Marvin, to suggest to me that the visits of Mrs. Reyburn were not only injurious to Mrs. Marvin, but unpleasant to her friends; and he desired me, as the medical adviser of Mrs. Marvin, to hint to you that you should make few, if any, visits to that lady."

"And what did you tell him?" cried Mrs. Reyburn, impulsively.

"I told him," replied the doctor, "that I had long felt that the visits of the Marvin relations were injurious to my patient, because they persisted in urging upon her exciting and distasteful topics. I also gently hinted that his own visits might be open to the same condemnation; but that I always hailed Mrs. Reyburn's presence in a sick-room, knowing that she would benefit both mind and body."

"The next thing they will be sending you word that Mrs. Marvin has engaged another physician, and will dispense with your services."

"Hut, tut!" replied the old gentleman, "I wouldn't pay one minute's attention to anything they might choose to say. Mrs. Marvin has given me her fullest confidence, and made me guardian of her child, and I shall look after her as my own daughter. It would be a pretty time of day if I lent an ear to Father Munot, or any father of them all."

"I believe they've made just some such story for Mr. Bradford, and, as it is on my way home, I shall stop there. It is six o'clock," she added, drawing out her watch, "but I'll free my mind of this matter, if I do make supper late."

"That's right, that's right!" said the old doctor, rubbing his plump hands with satisfaction. "Keep a sharp eye on them, Mrs. Reyburn; follow them up; we'll match them. There never was the like of this Church of Rome: let them get hold of a subject, especially of a *rich* one, and they stick to it like a dog to a root. But we'll match them this time."

Mrs. Reyburn had bowed good-evening, and

was already on the sidewalk. A few minutes more found her in Mr. Bradford's parlor. The reverend gentleman did not delay to meet his guest, but soon entered the room—a dignified, benevolent old man.

“I am glad to see you,” he said; “how is my good Brother Reyburn to-day?”

“We are well, I thank you. I will not detain you, for I know you have been called from the supper-table. I came to know why you have not been to see Mrs. Marvin lately?”

Mr. Bradford was well accustomed to Mrs. Reyburn's impulsive manner of dashing without any circumlocution into any matter of interest, and he answered kindly, and gravely: “Mrs. Reyburn, when last I called upon our friend her servant took me to the parlor, and presently returned to inform me that her mistress was too feeble to see me, and when ^{it} able to receive my visit would have pleasure in sending for me.”

“I knew it was something of that kind,” cried Mrs. Reyburn, impetuously. “Without doubt that message came from Mrs. Duval; it was

never sent by Virginia. To-day Mrs. Marvin was lamenting that your calls had been less frequent than formerly. Mr. Bradford, they are trying to force Mrs. Marvin into the Romish Church—at least to spread an impression that she is in that faith—and to get influence over her child. Between Father Munot and the Marvin family she is nearly persecuted, and only to-day I got hold of a scheme of theirs to get rid of her Protestant nurse. Do go there, and insist upon at least seeing her nurse, upon whom alone you can depend for the truth.”

“I am glad you have told me this,” said he.
“I shall most certainly go there.”

“I am sure Mrs. Marvin will look for you anxiously. I won’t detain you any longer. Good evening;” and once more Mrs. Reyburn went her way. The next stopping-place was her own house. A girl of nine was sitting by the front window, too much absorbed in reading to notice her mother’s approach. Not so a little fairy of three, who, in white dress and floating sash, stood on the doorstep, and who called out,

"Tea's ready!" as soon as Mrs. Reyburn drew near.

"Can't I ring the bell?" shouted a boy of six, who, mounted on the railing, was using his belt for a bridle, and enjoying the fiction of riding a spirited horse.

"So you are all waiting impatiently for me—and your suppers?" said Mrs. Reyburn.

"Father isn't," said the girl in the window; "he is working away in the study, and very likely thinks it is just after dinner."

If this had been "father's" opinion up to that moment, it could be so no longer, for Master Bob, taking silence for consent, was furiously ringing the tea-bell in the door of the dining-room. Edna closed her book with a sigh that caused her mother to smile, while little Elsie had climbed the stairs to have the privilege of riding down on her father's shoulder. Mrs. Reyburn glanced about the group, and in her heart prayed God to keep them all closely shielded within the fold of a simple Protestant faith.



CHAPTER II.

MRS. REYBURN'S attentions to her sick friend had been constant, but now, recognizing the crafty schemes and machinations that were woven about her dying couch, she felt that daily she must visit the sick room, to guard her friend from these foes of her own household, and to cheer her with hopes of the ultimate triumph of the truth.

She resolved that each afternoon should find her at Mrs. Marvin's. Mrs. Reyburn was not alone in her determination to pay the invalid every possible attention. Mrs. Duval, the widow's sister-in-law, also resolved to redouble the efforts she had been making in behalf of her own Church. While Mrs. Reyburn had concluded upon constant afternoon visits, Mrs. Duval,

seizing Time by the forelock, took the morning for her advances. Early in the day, after the events we have narrated, Mrs. Duval, and a tall, slender woman dressed in a coarse black garb, entered Mrs. Marvin's house; and while the woman remained in the little room where had passed the conversation between Mrs. Reyburn and Father Munot, Mrs. Duval went up to her sister's chamber. Mrs. Rose had promised Mrs. Duval that she would resign her situation as Mrs. Marvin's nurse the previous evening; and, nothing doubting that this had been done, Mrs. Duval came provided with a successor.

Mrs. Marvin was alone, and her sister-in-law began her visit with the tenderest inquiries about her rest during the past night and her appetite to-day—whether she did not feel “just one little bit” stronger, and how was that cough? Her interest thus manifested, she now brought forth a small store of flattery :

“If you had as much vanity as some people, Virginia, sickness might be more endurable on account of its being so becoming to you. I have

heard consumption compared to our autumn, that beautifies to destroy."

"I find myself," replied Mrs. Marvin, quietly, "in too serious a position to devote any thought to mere personal appearance."

"I see, my dear," replied Mrs. Duval, with a look of intense sympathy, "that you are worrying about your nurse, and I do not wonder at it; but dismiss your anxiety. Mrs. Rose told me yesterday that she meant to leave, and I could give myself no rest until I had procured some one to fill her place. I have found a most excellent woman, one in every way suitable, and indeed I have brought her with me this morning, that you might see her at once."

"Mrs. Rose does not expect to leave me," said Mrs. Marvin, calmly.

"What! has she not told you?" cried Mrs. Duval, surprised and disconcerted; "she will do so very soon, however, for to me she was quite positive."

Mrs. Rose here entered the room with a small tray, and Mrs. Marvin said, "Mrs. Rose, I have

been telling my sister that you intend to stay with me."

"Yes, ma'am," said Mrs. Rose, "indeed I will stay with you. I never left a lady as was so sick and needed me, h'and I won't begin bad manners here, where I 'ave all that 'art could wish."

Fearing that the good nurse might go on to remarks that would breed unpleasant feelings, Mrs. Marvin suggested to her some duties in the upper part of the house, and was again left alone with her sister.

Mrs. Duval bit her lips in vexation, but recovering herself, plunged into a new scheme for reaching the end she desired:

"I did not regret hearing Mrs. Rose was to leave; indeed, I have hoped she would do so, to save me the trouble of speaking, as now seems my duty. Mrs. Rose, I am informed, is dishonest, troublesome with the servants, and disrespectful in her remarks about yourself. You had better let her go. Give her a present and get rid of her. The woman I have waiting

down stairs is a model nurse, and will be of the greatest use and comfort to you."

This "woman down stairs" was in reality a Sister of Mercy, who had by especial permission made some change in her garb, that she might not startle the Protestant patient. Skillful in nursing, soft of tongue and light of step, a very Jesuit, in principle, she would have filled all the boundaries of Mrs. Duval's desires. Perhaps Mrs. Marvin had some suspicion of the real character of this nurse, for her eyes met those of her sister-in-law with a long, searching look, before which Mrs. Duval's lids fell, and a slight red dyed her cheeks.

"I shall keep Mrs. Rose," said Mrs. Marvin, in a decided tone.

Mrs. Duval sat twisting her watch-chain, and an uncomfortable silence ensued. This was broken at last by Mrs. Duval, who had determined to see where her sister-in-law stood as regarded her Catholic relations, and what disposition she was likely to make of Elleanore.

"My dear Virginia," said Mrs. Duval, "it is

useless to tell you that I expect to see you recover from this illness, for, however greatly we all desire the restoration of your health, we cannot expect it."

"I am aware, Harriet, that my remaining days will be but few," said Mrs. Marvin.

"There have been between us," continued Mrs. Duval, "periods of coldness which we all very much regret. However much we may have misunderstood each other, we have always felt for you the tenderest regard, and your child has filled in our hearts her father's place."

"Harriet," said Mrs. Marvin, laying her hand on her sister's arm, "in these, my dying hours, I can only remember the kindness and affection that you have often shown me. I may have been too hasty with you all. If I have, forgive me."

"Do not mention it," replied Mrs. Duval, gently. "We desire you to consider us your best friends—the most loving friends of your child, and her natural guardians. Our hearts and our homes shall be open to her as to our

own families; her interests shall be our interests; in us she shall find protectors for her youth; she shall be our peculiar and most precious trust."

Thus taking for granted that in her family rested the guardianship of Elleanore, Mrs. Duval spoke with much emotion.

Mrs. Marvin lifted up her heart in a prayer for strength, and summoning all her resolution, replied: "In these, my last hours, Harriet, courage and truth become me. While I recognize your claims as relations, bear with me; while I tell you of other and higher claims that I must consider. In all sincerity, I tell you that I seek the spiritual good of my daughter before all other things. Her religious interests are my chief concern. I firmly believe that in the principles of Protestantism safety lies: I desire her with an earnest heart to embrace those principles, and to serve the Lord in all simplicity. To further this, my chief wish for her, I have left her in the hands of Protestant guardians, and while I hope she will have friendly and affectionate

feelings for all her kindred, those guardians must have her in entire control."

To these words, uttered slowly and in a clear, firm voice, Mrs. Duval listened with increasing excitement. Her eyes sparkled with rage, her lips were compressed, the veins on her white forehead stood out like cords. Hardly giving Mrs. Marvin time to finish speaking, she cried out: "It is wrong, it is wicked, it is shameful; it shall not be! Your child and her fortune naturally belong to us and to her father's Church, and we will have her. You cannot so hedge her in with legal quibbles and Protestant guardians but we will have her and keep her! How dare you put a division between the girl and her own kindred. This is what comes of marrying a heretic!"

While Mrs. Duval was thus speaking the door of a small dressing-room was pushed wider open, and Elleanore Marvin entered her mother's apartment. Saith the good Dean of Canterbury, "Few maidens can carry the weight of 'Elleanore.'" Elleanore Marvin was one of those few ;

her stately name became her right well. Of a height of figure and dignity of carriage beyond her years, combining the strong will and intellectual power of her father with the gracious spirit of her mother, though Elleanore could not be called beautiful, she was striking, and, aside from her fortune, would have been a worthy stake for the playing of Father Munot and his coadjutors.

"Aunt Harriet," said Elleanore, coolly, "the doctor does not allow mother to be excited."

"Do you think," said Mrs. Duval, "that I shall allow the doctor to hinder me from making an effort to save your soul?"

"I might as well tell you, Aunt Harriet, that I am a Protestant, and shall always be one."

"You are a young and foolish child, but with experience you will gain discretion, and under proper tuition will yield your faith where it belongs—to the only true Church."

"I trust that experience will only confirm me in my present belief," began Elleanore, but was prevented from saying more by feeling her

mother's hand tremble in her clasp. She turned and saw a ghastly change had passed over that dear face, and that her parent appeared to be sinking rapidly.

"See, see what you have done!" she cried, catching up a vinaigrette and a bottle of perfume. "Oh mother, mother!" and she began bathing her mother's face. Mrs. Duval sprang up really alarmed, and looked for a fan, while Mrs. Rose, running in, pushed both Mrs. Duval and Elleanore away from the couch, and applied herself to the restoration of the patient.

"Oh dear!" mourned Mrs. Rose as she gave cordials, bathed Mrs. Marvin's face and hands, and raised her higher on her pillows, "h'if h'ever I saw such persecution of a lady! h'it's enough to move a 'art of stone to see her lie like this, all out of h'opposition."

Amid Mrs. Rose's good offices and half-smothered grumbling, Mrs. Marvin began to revive, and Mrs. Duval, in truth much relieved, put on her gloves and prepared to go

home. Elleanore stood looking out of the window and did not turn to say good-morning, and Mrs. Marvin being too weak to notice anything, and Mrs. Rose highly indignant, Mrs. Duval's departure was rather uncomfortable. She found the woman in black waiting for her with the utmost patience, and in her ear she poured out the story of Mrs. Marvin's obstinate heresy and Elleanore's bad temper.

When Mrs. Reyburn went to Mrs. Marvin's in the afternoon, the invalid had recovered somewhat from the excitement of the morning, and was receiving a call from Mr. Bradford, her pastor. Catherine, the servant who answered Mrs. Reyburn's ring, said very positively that Mrs. Marvin was worse and could not see any one that afternoon. Mrs. Reyburn, however, stepped into the hall, and was about to ask for Mrs. Rose, when Elleanore came running down stairs, and taking her friend's hand, welcomed her eagerly, and asked her into the small parlor. As soon

as she had seated her friend, she turned to the hall, and calling Catherine, who was returning to the basement, she demanded with some sharpness, "Who told you to say mother would receive no more calls to-day?" Catherine looked sulky and made no reply.

"It is not half an hour since you told Mr. Bradford the same thing: now I should like to know your authority?"

"Mrs. Duval told me," said Catherine, in a sullen tone.

"Mrs. Duval is not mistress here," said Elleanore. "I desire you to obey no more of her orders."

"It's hard telling who is mistress," said Catherine, sturdily: "Mrs. Marvin, Mrs. Rose, yourself, Mrs. Duval, all give me more orders than I can keep in my head, and sometimes one right against the other."

The fact is, that Mrs. Duval, finding Catherine to be a girl likely to suit her purposes, had established her own authority over her by various shining fees.

"Hereafter," said Elleanore, "you are to receive your orders from my mother, and, if she is too unwell, from Mrs. Rose."

"I don't like two mistresses: I'd rather go where there is only one," insisted Catherine.

"Perhaps you had better find such a place," said Elleanore; then, recollecting that she was rather transgressing the bounds of her own authority in the house, added, "You may go now, Catherine, and remember what I have told you."

"I wish there wasn't any Aunt Duval to meddle all the time," said Elleanore, as she entered the room where Mrs. Reyburn was sitting. "Now let me take your bonnet and mantle for a while; I want to tell you all that has happened."

With this introduction, Elleanore entered into a narration of the morning's trouble—the conclusion of her story being, "And now you see, Mrs. Reyburn, what sort of a girl Catherine is. I wish she would go away."

"I know of a place that would suit

Catherine very well, and I think I could get your mother a girl of fourteen—the child of a widow belonging to our church—who could wait upon the door and perform most of Catherine's duties."

"I wish you would," said Elleanore.

While Elleanore had been telling Mrs. Reyburn the history of the morning, Mr. Bradford had finished his call and left the house; and now Mrs. Rose came to say that Mrs. Marvin was ready to see Mrs. Reyburn.

Elleanore went to her own apartment: Mrs. Rose, as was her custom during Mrs. Reyburn's visits, retired to the dressing-room, and the two friends were left alone.

"If you have seen Elleanore," said Mrs. Marvin, "you have heard all about this morning; she is very much excited about it."

"It may have a good effect on her, making her more ready for attacks upon her belief, and showing plainly to her the spirit with which she has to contend."

"Elleanore is now governed by mere im-

pulse: she is a Protestant because I am a Protestant. We know how weak is impulse to resist temptation, and even were she, by study and careful teaching, to become intellectually convinced of the fallacy of the creed of Rome, she would be still in danger of falling away to that belief through flattery, persecution, a specious argument, or by having her imagination fascinated by the pomp and splendor of that magnificent deception. Religion, my dear Grace, is of the heart, and by heart-religion only can one stand. May God convert my child to himself, that against all the allurements of the world, the flesh and the devil she may be strong in the whole armor of God."

"I have thought of this," replied Mrs. Reyburn. "Would it not be well to keep Elleanore now constantly with you, withdraw her from her regular studies, and have her study with you, as your health will permit, the Bible, the history of the Reformation, and read those many excellent volumes that

have been published containing the history of the Covenanting Church of Scotland, of the Huguenots and the Waldenses. It may be that this course of study, and the words you will speak to her as she goes on with it, will be made instrumental in the conversion of her soul, and the fixing of her sentiments."

"I wish I had done this before," said Mrs. Marvin. "I am now so feeble I fear I can accomplish but little. Yet I will do that little prayerfully, and may the blessing of God follow the work."

It seemed as if Mrs. Marvin's strength were renewed for the task she had set herself. She improved considerably in health, and entered with zest into the course of reading and study she had assigned her daughter. Hour after hour Elleanore passed by her mother's couch in the study of the word of God, or reading of those who were "slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held;" and as she read how "the blood of the martyrs had

indeed been the seed of the Church," how those who had been persecuted "suffered it, looking unto Jesus," her eyes would flash, her cheeks glow, and her heart swell high with enthusiasm; yet that generous young heart had never yet been touched by the tender love of God, had never trembled at his wrath, had never mourned for sin. How did that loving and dying mother watch and pray to mark in her child's heart the stirrings of that Spirit that cometh where he will, as the breeze wakes up in the forest in the slumberous stillness of a summer day!

When Mrs. Duval left the house of her sister-in-law, angry and defeated, she was ready to resolve never to go there again, but to separate herself entirely from those who thwarted her dearest plans in this world, and whose heresy would for ever divide them from her in the world to come.

At her own home she found a friend, a lady, who, falling away from Protestantism to the Church of Rome, was zealous for her new re-

ligion, even beyond those born in its communion. Here was a sympathizing auditor, and to her Mrs. Duval gave a highly-colored account of the kindness she herself had displayed to these ungrateful ones, and the contumelious treatment she had received.

“Of course,” said Mrs. Duval, “I love my brother’s child, and am anxious for the safety of her soul. Then I cannot consent to have his property used to build up heresy, and so injure the true Church. And then, my dear friend, for years I have destined Elleanore to a convent. What a charming Mother Superior she would make! Her beauty, her dignity, her fine mind, her fortune, her family, all point her out as the very one for such a position. What an advantage to us all to have her hold such a place! and how much to the credit of us who should be the means of placing her in it! Oh, to have one of those devout, saintly sisters of our own flesh and blood, and performing for us meritorious works, and looking after our spiritual interests, while we are shut up to the hurry and bus-

tle of society,—how can I resign such a cherished hope?”

“But,” observed Mrs. Duval’s friend, “if you are doomed to disappointment in your niece, you can yet have this satisfaction in one of your own daughters.”

“One of my daughters!” cried Mrs. Duval, aghast; “why, my dear madam, I have but three.”

“Very true, and one of those devoted to the Church—”

“But,” interrupted Mrs. Duval, “what a sacrifice, when they are so eminently calculated to shine in society! My Victoria, every one says, has uncommon beauty; Eugenia has a wit that will make her a reigning spirit in the highest circles; and to shut up my little Violet, who already shows such a wonderful musical talent, in a convent! Oh, madam, they will aid the Church vastly more by throwing their influence for her into society than by hiding themselves in a convent.”

The visitor seeing that she had erred, said

meekly, "I see the force of your remarks; you know that I am ignorant in these matters."

Mollified by this concession, Mrs. Duval condescendingly replied: "You will understand these things better by and by. As regards Elleanore, the early loss of her parents will naturally throw a gloom over her character, which will make the quiet, the religious exercises and the labors of a convent congenial to her. With no mother to watch over her, the convent would be a fitting refuge from the temptations of this world, and the haughty, defiant spirit she exhibited this morning certainly needs restraint."

Mrs. Duval was not alone in her views for Elleanore. Her mother, old Mrs. Marvin, had for her grand-daughter but one wish—to see her take the vows of some religious order.

Weary of a life that amid the glare of fortune and fashion had brought a pained unrest, disgusted with that cup of pleasure that had been bitter amid its foam and sparkle, old Mrs. Marvin looked to a conventual life as the fullness of rest and calm, of sweet content in this life, and

safety in the future world. To see one of her descendants caught out of the whirling vortex of society, and set apart to mortification of the flesh, purifying of the spirit, holiness in this life, and salvation in the life beyond, becoming finally a treasure-house of goodness, from which the other branches of the family might draw to fill up their own shortcomings—this was the grandmother's cherished hope, her plan for Elleanore.

Neither old Mrs. Marvin nor Father Munot advised Mrs. Duval to resent the opposition she had received from her sick sister-in-law.

"Success is worth many sacrifices," said the wily father. "All these mortifications redound to your credit. Perseverance will prove you a true daughter of the Church."

"Don't give it up, Harriet," said the feeble old mother from the chair where, with her prayer book, her rosary, and the "Lives of the Saints," she passed her days. "I can't go there; your sisters have not energy such as you have; I will help you all I can by my prayers to the Virgin and to holy Saint

Catharine, that I chose for Elleanore's patron saint the day the child was born."

"I wish you could go there and give them both a good talking to," said Harriet, bluntly; "*that* would do more good than all the praying." Mrs. Duval evidently was given more to works than to faith.

"I will go," said the old lady. "I haven't been out of the house this six months; but you get the carriage ready, and I'll go and see what influence her husband's poor, sick, old mother has over Virginia."

"Do," said Mrs. Duval, briskly. "I don't believe it will do you any hurt, and if Virginia has any heart at all, she'll feel your coming."

"I've sent her many messages, and now I'll go and make peace between you; and you can keep going, and we'll have Elleanore safe yet," said Mrs. Marvin, who, palsied, sick and unhappy, was risking her eternal safety on donations to her Church, prayers to the Virgin and saints innumerable, assured by Father Munot

that her salvation was certain, and yet shrinking back from death with horror unutterable.

A surprise it surely was to Mrs. Marvin to see her almost bedridden mother-in-law come tottering into her room, supported by Mrs. Rose and a servant. The old lady was placed in a large chair by the invalid's couch, and for some minutes was too feeble to speak.

"You are very kind to come and see me, mother; it is a great exertion, and one that I did not expect," said Mrs. Virginia Marvin.

"I wanted to see you," gasped the old lady, "and I wanted to make friends between you and Harriet. I want her to come and see you, so I can hear from you every day. I haven't forgotten my son's wife, if I am a poor old woman."

"I feel no enmity toward sister Harriet," said Mrs. Marvin. "There are some subjects I had rather she would not force on me, but as a sister she is always welcome."

"And I'll tell her to come and see you?" said the old lady, eagerly.

"Yes, mother, tell her we must still be friends."

"I knew you had a kind heart," said the old lady. "You were always as kind to me as my own flesh and blood. And now, Virginia, I want you to let Elleanore come and see me. She hasn't been to our house this good while, and it isn't right for her to neglect her old grandmother."

Old Mrs. Marvin had been a handsome and stately woman in her prime. As her daughter-in-law looked on her now, shriveled, excitable, restless, half-childish, and contrasted the present with days when that same woman was tall and proud and dignified, tears of pity filled her eyes.

"I have not hindered Elleanore from visiting you, mother," said Virginia.

"You'll tell her to come, won't you?" said old Mrs. Marvin, quickly. "She's my son's only child, and I haven't forgotten when he was the pride of my heart. And," going back to the first part of the conversation, "don't you mind

Harriet. She means all well to you, and she sha'n't force things on you; I'll tell her not to do it. Of course it isn't pleasant to have her talk to you about dying, and she sha'n't do it."

"It isn't that, mother. I don't mind hearing about death." Young Mrs. Marvin raised herself on her arm, and looked earnestly at her mother-in-law as she spoke. "I *love* to think of dying; it is good and beautiful to be going home to God."

"Love to talk about dying!" cried the mother-in-law

"Yes, mother, do not you?"

"No, no," said the old lady covering her face with her hands; "it is horrible, horrible!"

A look of intense pity swept over Virginia's face as she laid back on her pillow. When the old woman's mind had come back to the present, her daughter-in-law said:

"It is not death that Harriet troubles me by talking about. But I am a Protestant, mother, and she wants to make me a Roman Catholic."

"It is all kindness and true love, daughter, and for the good of your soul."

"But, mother, if I am satisfied in my own religion, why not let me alone in it?"

"Because you are not safe in it. We want to save you."

"Now, dear mother, you have just told me that your creed has not made you ready for death—that death is horrible to you. Why ask me to give for that creed my own, which makes me rejoice in the view of death, which makes eternity glorious to me? This, mother, is my reason for my faith; it makes 'to live Christ and to die gain!'"

Old Mrs. Marvin listened to these words with fixed attention; every feature of her daughter-in-law's face attested sincerity. Virginia's eyes were bright with hope, a smile of joy was on her lips; into the mind of the elder lady entered belief in the sincerity of the younger, envy of such exalted happiness, doubt of the creed that had given her own soul but husks to eat. A look of perplexity and of dread

filled her face; she bent forward in her chair, and spread out both her hands in a deprecating way. "Don't, don't," she cried, in a husky voice, "don't tempt my soul. Don't, Virginia, I am a poor weak old woman; please, don't tempt me."

"Oh, mother," said Virginia, in a voice of love and pity, "in Jesus Christ you might be strong."

There was a long silence; the younger Mrs. Marvin lay looking sorrowfully at her mother-in-law, praying in her heart that God would loose her spirit from its shackles and bring it into the freedom of the children of God. The elder lady was thinking of the words of her daughter-in-law, and wondering how such a frame of mind had been attained. At last she said, "Do you pray, Virginia?"

"Yes, mother, frequently—to God alone."

"No saint to help you?"

"No, mother, and I know my prayers are heard, for they are answered."

"You read—"

"Yes, mother—my Bible mostly, little else."

"But how can you get the true meaning?"

"By reading and praying over it, it becomes food for my soul. I rest upon its promises and they make me strong. I find when I follow its counsels that I do right: I think of its good words and they comfort me."

The old lady shook her head. "I'm afraid you are all wrong, Virginia."

"But, mother, I am happy and not afraid to die." This, however it might have been combated by others, was an unanswerable argument to the old lady, who lived in such terror of death.

"I must go home now, daughter. You have said very strange things to me. I shall be sorry to have you wrong, for then you will be lost; but if you are right, I am wrong, and what will become of me? I may never see you again, Virginia; I don't get out of my room often."

"I hope God will be with you, mother, and enlighten you as you need, and we shall meet in heaven."

The two clasped hands; the old lady bent down and kissed her daughter-in-law's cheek: then, assisted by Mrs. Rose and a servant, left the room, one thought filling her mind: "Virginia is a heretic, and yet she is not afraid to die."

A profound pity for her mother filled young Mrs. Marvin's heart; fervently did she implore the good Shepherd to bring that poor wandering soul into his safe fold. She told Elleanore of the old lady's visit, and charged her to go and see her grandmother.

"I don't want to send you into temptation, my child, yet it seems a duty for you to visit your father's mother. Go, and consider how little the Church of Rome offers to give real solace in the hour of death."

Old Mrs. Marvin had little to say to her family about the visit to the invalid. She told them that Elleanore was coming to see her, and that Virginia would be glad to see Harriet; and with this they were satisfied, never dreaming that the poor shadowed soul

had in that sick room got one blessed peep out from the folds of that gloom of ignorance amid which she was groping her cheerless way to the tomb.





CHAPTER III.

IN the course of study upon which she had entered, Elleanore Marvin had other instructors than her mother. Mr. and Mrs. Reyburn and Mr. Bradford were much interested in the young girl, and she often found her way to their houses, where a welcome always awaited her. The manner of Mrs. Duval had never been attractive to her niece, and the girl could not fancy visiting at her house. Mrs. Marvin, however, told Elleanore that she deemed it her duty to visit her grandmother, and thus urged, Elleanore went to call on the old lady, who made her home at Mrs. Duval's. The family were all very kind to Elleanore, her cousins welcomed her warmly, and Mrs. Duval poured forth a strain of flattery, that, while it

might have pleased many young persons, was disgusting to Elleanore. Going one day to see her grandmother, Elleanore found Bridget, a young servant, in tears. Elleanore had a kind heart, readily touched by the sorrows of those about her, and could not pass Bridget without a word of inquiry as to the cause of her troubles.

"Indeed," said Bridget, "it's a lether; it is from me ould mither that's home, 'an it's not meself as can read it."

"And will not some of the family read it?"

"None ov 'em cares for me," sobbed Bridget, "nor iver axed me a word of me home nor me folks, nor how long I'd been over. An' the gurls in the kitchen will be joking an' laughin' at me lether; I know their thricks."

"Let me read your letter to you, Bridget. Come, I'll go in the dining-room and read it to you. I know you'll be glad to hear from your home."

Won by Elleanore's kind tone and sympathizing looks, Bridget took the letter from her pocket and accompanied the young lady to the dining-

room, where she listened, well pleased, to news from "home." Not a shadow of a smile came over Elleanore's face at the quaint, homely expressions, no tremor of mirth shook her voice as she found the health of the cow, pig and chickens set down in an important place, next the health of the mother herself. Bridget felt sure of the young lady's friendliness, and when Elleanore offered to answer the letter for her, the warm heart of the Irish girl poured itself forth in thanks and sincere laudations of the "goodness of the miss."

Elleanore answered the letter, and became also Bridget's confidant, hearing how a younger sister was to be brought from the "ould country," and then "the mither herself when we grow rich."

It was a simple little incident, but like many another little seed of kindness dropped, like the Spaniard's fruit-stone, by the highways and byways of life, it was to spring up after a time into a goodly fruitage.

Often, as on the day with which we opened this story, did the black-robed figure of Father

Munot pass up and down the broad, darkened stairway of Mrs. Marvin's house, often did the white-haired and restless-eyed father bend above the invalid's couch with soft and artful words; and though again and again Virginia Marvin assured him that she should die in the faith in which she had lived, that her own pastor was her spiritual adviser, the visits of the persistent father did not cease. When Father Munot entered the sick room, Elleanore betook herself to some other part of the house. Doing so one day, she found refuge in the favorite little parlor, and opened a copy of "*Milton's Poetical Works*," which had just been given her. The book, elegantly bound in purple and gold, lay on a small marble-topped table, and over it bent Elleanore, her dark eyes intently fixed on the fascinating page, her head supported on her slender hand.

As she sat thus, she caught the eye of Father Munot, who was about to leave the house. He came with his light, catlike tread into the room, and placing one hand on the back of the young reader's chair, bent over her and scanned the



Elleanore and Father Munot.

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words that were absorbing her attention. Elleanore started, a crimson flush of anger at the intrusion swept over her face, and she was about to close the book when Father Munot laid his hand on it, and leaving the position she resented, stood beside the table.

"You read the works of a gifted mind, my daughter."

"Undoubtedly," said Elleanore, puzzled.

"And yet is poison but apt to be more fatal if presented in beautiful form. What pity that a mind so gifted should descend to assaults so unjust, to accusations so false against our gracious and holy Church!"

He laid his finger on the words Elleanore had been reading:

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints."

"Let history prove if it is false or unjust," said Elleanore, whose hot young blood could not consent to silence.

"History written by our enemies, garbled and itself unjust," pursued the priest, in a low,

melancholy tone. "A mind so generous as yours, daughter, should consider with equal care both sides of this question."

To this remark Elleanore could on the moment frame no fitting reply. Father Munot paused for an instant, and then in the same tone of injured innocence proceeded:

"From historians that have sold themselves to falsehood, from the lips of those that hate us, from even such lofty poetry as this, perverted from a good end, young, ardent, impulsive hearts, such as yours, are taught." His finger moved down a few lines and pointed, and Elleanore read aloud:

"That from these may grow

An hundredfold, who, having learned the way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

"It is thus," he said, wrapping his priestly garment closer about him and dropping his head in mingled dignity and sorrow, "that *you* are taught to call that true and holy Church which God hath set as his one infallible tribunal in a wicked world."

Elleanore sat unable to reply, and extending both hands over her with a murmured benediction, Father Munot left the room. With such wiles as these, such semblance of humility, of holiness contemned and virtue unappreciated, can Rome attack an unsuspecting heart. Yet, sitting there after the priest had gone, recalling every sorrowful tone, every word of mild regret and grief, Elleanore felt in her inmost soul that were the hands of that "infallible tribunal," as of yore, holding with firm grasp the helm of power, instead of the benediction would be the curse, instead of the mild reproach the furious denunciation, instead of the straying daughter tenderly entreated would be the dungeon and the persecution even unto death. The power of Rome has changed—her spirit never. Ill-assorted as the white hairs and flashing eyes of Father Munot are the feebleness and the intolerant spirit of the Church of Rome.

Growing weary of the continued visits and arguments of Father Munot, weary also of the

incessant reasonings of Mrs. Duval in behalf of Romanism, Mrs. Marvin one day made an appeal to her sister-in-law, that had a far different effect from that she had intended.

"Harriet," said Mrs. Marvin. "I have a favor to ask of you—the last, probably, that I shall ever ask."

"If it is my power to grant it, I will do so most gladly," replied Mrs. Duval.

"It is this: urge me no longer to change my religion. Speak to me all you will of Christ, of faith in him, of the rest of heaven, but do not weary my last hours with a creed to which I cannot consent. Also, do try and keep Father Munot from coming here. I have said all I can to end his visits. The doctor has represented them to him as injurious to me, yet come he will. Keep him away, Harriet: suffer him to weary me no more, and let me die in peace."

"You ask impossibilities," replied Mrs. Duval, coldly. "I have a duty to you which I must fulfill."

"You have done your best—efforts are hopeless. I exonerate you from all further responsibility."

"You cannot. My conscience, my Church, my priest, my family, all impose this duty upon me. I am better to you than you are to yourself. For the sake of gratifying whims that are the offspring of heresy, I cannot forget my duty to your soul."

"Harriet, your efforts end only in disturbing the quiet of my last days. The time that I would give to thoughts of heaven and my preparation for death is distracted by anxieties for my child, for whose young heart so many snares are set. If you ever have had any love for me, do leave me and my child to God, and disturb me no longer."

Mrs. Duval shook her head. "Your words," she replied, calmly, "are as the entreaties of a patient against the physician's medicine, the surgeon's knife and probe. You do not know what is for your own good or the good of your child."

Mrs. Marvin turned away in despair and covered her face with her hands.

When Mrs. Duval reviewed this conversation, she took vast credit to herself for the calmness and resolution she had displayed; and dwelling upon each of Mrs. Marvin's words, she drew from them a meaning favorable to herself. What meant this strong anxiety about Elleanore—the entreaties that the girl should be let alone—unless the mother had discovered in the child a secret leaning toward Romanism, a readiness to yield to arguments for that faith?

“It must be so,” cried Mrs. Duval. “I have it now: Elleanore has certainly discovered some inclinations toward our Church, and her mother is alarmed by it.” The more Mrs. Duval mused on this subject, the more she was convinced of the truth of her theory, and in imagination she saw Elleanore already flying to the Romish Church for shelter, giving herself and her fortune into its hands, and becoming the devotee of the family. So edified was Mrs. Duval by

these reflections that in the course of a few days she purchased two or three volumes, the perusal of which she was sure would effect Elleanore's conversion. These volumes were elegantly bound, printed on tinted paper, in type delightful to behold; and with them, as a peace-offering, she sent a box of the choicest French candies and two paper-weights, the most expensive that the city afforded. These were despatched to Elleanore by Bridget. The following day the little girl who had taken Catherine's place at Mrs. Marvin's appeared at Mrs. Duval's with the parcels containing the books, candy and paper-weights, accompanied by the following note:

"DEAR AUNT: Permit me to return your books, as their contents are not attractive to me, and I have no time to spare for reading them. As you doubtless intended the other gifts as a reward for reading the books, I return them also.

"ELLEANORE MARVIN."

"Obstinate, headstrong, impertinent girl!"

cried Mrs. Duval, angrily dashing the parcel to the floor; "but we will see who will conquer: she shall yield to us yet!"

The breaking open and scattering of the box of bon-bons, and the crash that told the ruin of the costly weights, recalled Mrs. Duval to her senses. The books were sent down to grace the parlor-table, the bon-bons were given to Violet, and the broken weights, laid in a private drawer, served often to remind Mrs. Duval of her resolve, now doubly strengthened, that Elleanore should be broken into the Catholic Church.

The next time she went to visit Mrs. Marvin, Mrs. Duval was met in the upper hall by Elleanore.

"Aunt Harriet—"

"Well, Elleanore?"

"I wish to say to you that my mother did not see your present to me—did not know of it at all. I consulted no one but myself in returning it. She is too feeble to be worried about it, and I wish you would not mention it."

Mrs. Duval was ready to reproach her niece

angrily for impudence and ingratitude, but, recalling various admonitions given by Father Munot, she repressed her indignation and said calmly, "You may one day realize the kindness that you now despise."

"I do not wish to despise any kindness; but, Aunt Harriet, think how angry *you* would be were matters so changed that *you* were sick and my mother was trying to lead *your* children away from your Church to hers."

Mrs. Duval tossed up her head, saying, "My daughters are not to be turned away from the Church in which they were baptized."

"Neither is my mother's daughter," said Elleanore, with spirit.

"My daughters are too well instructed to be led away from their own faith," continued Mrs. Duval, resenting the bare idea of such a schism.

"And I am too well instructed to be led away from mine," replied the rash Elleanore. Mrs. Duval turned abruptly and entered the sick room, leaving Elleanore standing in the hall.

While Mrs. Duval came and went between her

house and that of her sister-in-law, and Mrs Marvin drew daily visibly nearer death, old Mrs. Marvin sat in her easy-chair at her daughter's house, apparently engaged as usual with her beads and her missal, but really dwelling in heart upon the joyful hope that her daughter-in-law had so clearly expressed, and longing for whatever talisman it was that could rob death of his terrors and transform a hideous spectre into an angel of light. Brooding on these things, while each day her own hold on life seemed loosening, and she herself about to slip away from all to which she clung into some dark and horrible abyss, the poor old woman resolved to go again to the one place where she had seen a ray of light flung upon the valley of shadow.

"I am going to see Virginia again," she said.

"I don't see any need of it," said Mrs. Duval.

"I must go," said the old lady.

"It isn't one bit of use."

"Perhaps it will be. I'm sure it did good before," persisted the old mother.

"Oh well, do as you like: shall I go with you?"

"No, you'll fret her, maybe. I'll go alone."

Alone she went. Again she was almost carried to the easy-chair beside Mrs. Marvin's couch. Her first question was, when they were alone, "Do you feel just as you did, Virginia—not afraid to die?"

"Mother, I really believe I am ready to depart and be with Christ."

"And do you expect to get to heaven as soon as you are dead?"

"Yes, mother. Jesus said to the thief on the cross, '*To-day* thou shalt be with me in Paradise.' We read that Lazarus was carried by angels, not to purgatory, but to 'Abraham's bosom.' If *they* entered at once into their rest, why may not *I*. God's grace can be as full and free to me as to them."

"It is not," said the old lady, "that I dread purgatory so much—I have suffered much and can suffer more, if it will bring peace at last—but, Virginia, to think that they may forget me;

that masses may not be said for my soul; money may not be paid, and I never find heaven! How can I endure the thought?"

"Mother," said Mrs. Marvin, clasping the trembling old hand, "do you think the sacrifice of God's eternal Son was not enough to save souls that trust to him? Do you think there was anything lacking in his finished work that we must fill up by suffering? Do you think that he died for you, only to have you fail of glory eternally, because of the avarice or the carelessness of men? Oh, mother, what comfort is there in such a creed? Christ says, 'Look unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth.' Oh, mother, look, just look to Jesus and live. Don't let saints or the Virgin get between your soul and your Saviour: just look straight to him yourself."

The eyes of the old lady were fixed on her daughter-in-law's face; her shriveled hands trembled.

"If I only knew," she murmured.

"Read in your Bible, mother."

"I have no Bible."

"Get one."

"I dare not."

Oh, worse than heathen on heathen shores!
poor starved soul, shut out by false guides from
the free banquet of the King!

"There's some of the Bible in the Missal."

"Read that, mother, read that, and cry to
Jesus only. Don't pray to the saints or the Vir-
gin—good people dead and gone to glory long
ago—but pray to Jesus, who for you died and
rose again."

"But I don't know many prayers to Jesus."

"Mother," said the daughter, desperately,
"just take your prayer-book and use the pray-
ers you find there—use them with all your heart,
just putting the name of Jesus in the place of all
the other names you find."

"If I only dared. Oh, Virginia, don't, *don't*
set me wrong!"

"You will be right! Oh, mother, do it. Do
it as you value your soul! Do it as you want to
be rid of the fear of death."

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The old lady shook with the violence of her feelings. "I will—I'll try it," she said, her wrinkled cheek blanching at the temerity of her resolve.

"God help you to do so!" said young Mrs. Marvin in a whisper, sinking back on her pillow exhausted by the excitement of the conversation. That was the last interview between Virginia and her mother. They parted to meet no more until faith had changed to sight and hope had full fruition.

There had been apparently little change in Mrs. Marvin's health as the summer passed away; and now golden September had filled up the year's harvestings, and amid the melancholy pomp of October, leaf and blade and blossom were slowly dying. God often grants the wishes of his children as to the manner of their death, and in this solemn autumn-time he answered the prayers Virginia Marvin had offered through many a long, wakeful night; and when, like Hezekiah, she, on her bed of sickness, had "turned her face to the wall and prayed," the

ear of the Lord was open to hear her, and his heart of love was ready to answer.

Grace Reyburn came in early one morning to see her friend.

"I had a bad night," said Mrs. Marvin, "and Mrs. Rose was up all the time, and is nearly tired out."

"I wouldn't 'ave minded being up if you could 'ave rested," said Mrs. Rose.

"You had better stay to-day, Grace, and we will let Mrs. Rose have a sleep."

"I don't need h'any sleep," said Mrs. Rose; and so Mrs. Reyburn thought no more about staying. At length she rose to go. "I can't bear to see you go; I want you to stay," said Mrs. Marvin, retaining her friend's hand in her clasp, and looking wistfully at her.

"Why, I'll stay if you really want me to," replied Mrs. Reyburn, laying aside her bonnet and shawl and taking her seat. "I don't like to be idle all day," she said.

"Perhaps I'd better run home and get your work for you," said Elleanore.

"No, but take my purse and go and get me some dark calico; there's a poor child I promised a dress to, and I'll make that."

Elleanore got the calico, and then, bringing her own work, sat near her mother, and while Mrs. Rose went to take the nap she protested she did not need, the three friends passed the time together right pleasantly. By some means they began to speak of Dorcas, whom Peter restored to life.

"How delightful that was!" said Elleanore.

"To the friends doubtless, but I have always thought it must have been a disappointment to Dorcas, after thinking herself safely through the trials and fears and wrong-doings of life, to come back to all," replied Mrs. Marvin.

Mr. Bradford came in, and after a few soothing, elevating words about the New Jerusalem, read the fifteenth chapter of Corinthians and prayed. As the little group in the sick room rose from prayer, they saw that Mrs. Marvin's face wore a new, strange look. The experienced nurse shook her head. Elleanore flew to her

mother's side. Mrs. Marvin seemed like one wrapt in a pleasant dream, but the voice of her daughter roused her. Looking earnestly at her, she said in a clear voice, "Elleanore, there is no safety out of Christ. Will you seek him now, with all your heart, and take no rest to your soul until you rest in him?"

"I will, mother, I will," sobbed Elleanore.

Mrs. Marvin looked at her pastor and at Mrs. Reyburn, as if committing her child to their friendship; then turned away, peacefully folded her hands over her breast, closed her eyes, and with one gentle sigh had entered into her rest.

It had been as she wished: her friend, her pastor, had been near to testify that she died trusting in none but Jesus; there were none by to offer her false shadows instead of gospel truth—none to proclaim that she had died recreant to the faith she held dearer than life.

"Well," mourned Mrs. Rose, as with Mrs. Reyburn and a friend or two who had been called in, she proceeded to prepare the body for burial, "there's another blessed saint in 'eaven.

I'm sure I don't know what this world's coming to, when all such good ones die, and the likes of some other folks live and thrive."

Her remarks may have been called forth by hearing Mrs. Duval's voice in the lower hall.

Mrs. Reyburn had already sent for Mrs. Marvin's lawyer, and Mrs. Duval, finding that to him the charge of all her sister's affairs had been entrusted, and that he was giving his orders with an air of conscious authority that was not to be resisted, returned to her home.

"Harriet," said old Mrs. Marvin, "did Virginia die happy?"

"Why, mother, how can you ask such a question about a *heretic*?"

"But how did she look?" persisted the old lady.

"Well, as to that, I must say she looked very much as if she were taking a comfortable sleep. She didn't look *dead* at all."

"I suppose you're all going to the funeral, Harriet?"

"Why, mother! I really believe you're getting

crazy. Go to a Protestant funeral! *Of course not.* Why, mother, they might as well be heathen. Not a taper, nor a drop of holy water, nor a crucifix, nor a priest. Not a missal about—just the Bible that Mr. Bradford had been reading from lying open on the table; and Mrs. Reyburn putting a few white flowers in her hand. I told Mrs. Reyburn a crucifix would look better. I'm glad that *I'll* be laid out in a real Catholic manner, and be buried in consecrated ground, so there'll be *some* hope for my soul."

The old lady made no answer to this, but slowly turned over the leaves of her prayer-book, whilst Mrs. Duval felt sure her mother was the firmest of Catholics. What would she have said had she heard that night, instead of the "Ave, Mary," "Jesus, Son of God, pray for me!" stealing from that old mother's lips?

Out of those days of mourning, out of the furnace of affliction, came Elleanore Marvin with a purified spirit. Her soul rested on the Rock, Christ Jesus. Well was it for her that her soul, instead of now building on the shifting sands of

human impulse and knowledge, was on the firm Rock ; for now, for a season, the peaceful days of her life were ended, and darkly about her came the storms of human passion and misguided zeal.





CHAPTER IV.

A FORTNIGHT made a great change in Elleanore's circumstances. The house that had always been her home was rented, the furniture was sold, the pictures, ornaments, piano and silver went to the house of Doctor Grant, her mother's physician, trusty friend, and now one of Elleanore's guardians; the lawyer, Mr. Manners, being the other. Doctor Grant was childless, his wife one of the excellent of the earth; and Mrs. Marvin had felt that there Elleanore would find a safe and happy home.

Though none of the Marvin family had been present at the funeral, Elleanore resolved to treat them as kindly as possible. In disposing of the house and its furniture, she selected many articles

that had belonged to her father, and with the concurrence of the executors distributed them among his relatives; she also gave to each member of the family some memento of her mother; her cousins Victoria and Eugenia being made happy each with a valuable piece of jewelry.

In this distribution how did the heart of old Mrs. Marvin long for one of the Bibles that had belonged to her late daughter-in-law! but she dared not accept such a gift. Elleanore, however, gave the old lady a ring that Virginia had always worn, and her portrait beautifully framed. This picture she hung opposite her bed and would gaze on it for hours. To her this picture spoke; it filled up the silence with those earnest words that had once been spoken to her by its original. To the aged pilgrim the blue eyes of the portrait were eloquent with that hope that triumphed over death, and from the lips, half parted, ever came the pleading, "Oh, mother, as you value your soul, as you would have hope in death, trust in none but Jesus."

Elleanore's welcome at Doctor Grant's was

warm. The old couple were lonely; it was much to them to have a bright young face at their table—to have Elleanore and her youthful friends bringing into the dull, quiet house freshness and animation.

Mrs. Grant made Elleanore her central thought: to have the girl there was like having a daughter of her own; and Elleanore's piano was placed in the parlor, and her pictures and ornaments took the places of Mrs. Grant's old-fashioned treasures; and light and flowers came in to make the rooms cheerful for Elleanore; while an upholsterer was sent for to robe the pleasantest bed-room with something bright and new, that Elleanore might not be dreary in it.

It did not take many weeks for Elleanore to get fairly settled in her new home—to resume her place in the school where for several years she had been a pupil: her music-teacher came to give her lessons, as had been his custom in her own home.

Mrs. Duval had consulted many lawyers

with a hope of finding some way of getting Elleanore and her property into the hands of the Marvin family; but, assured by all that there was no possibility of altering the arrangements that had been made for the care of the young girl and her fortune, and getting, instead of encouragement in her schemes, simply advice to make herself contented and to let the matter drop, Mrs. Duval, being of an excitable nature, fell into a passion of long duration, and succeeded in making her whole family very uncomfortable.

Again and again did Mrs. Duval wish that she and all her relatives, especially the vexatious Elleanore, had been born in one of those judiciously-governed countries where the Romish Church has its own way in all things.

How did she rave against laws that with stern defences encircled that precious soul and yet more precious fortune! Abandoning these wishes, Mrs. Duval made others equally futile, wishing that the whole Marvin family had not been born into the world during the

present loose and tolerant government of these United States, but had delayed their existence until those halcyon days, which she felt sure would come, when America shall be the stronghold of that religion that has so long dwelt among the seven hills of Rome—when priests and cardinals shall direct the counsels of the nation and frame its laws.

Mrs. Duval's indignation having finally worn itself down into such quietude that reason had some chance of being heard, the lady suddenly realized that working is better for the attainment of an end than wishing, and forthwith proceeded to take counsel with Father Munot, who was quietly waiting for this turn of affairs.

"We must be patient and try persuasion," said the crafty father.

"I cannot endure the idea of petting and persuading such obstinate, wrong-headed, self-willed people."

"In this country and in this age," replied the priest, "we must go slowly if we hope for

success. Any such decided, energetic measures as we could take in Italy or Austria, set these Americans in a furor at once. In this country mild, hidden means are those we are forced to employ, and I do not despair of obtaining by these such a position for our Church in this land as shall render all reserve and concealment unnecessary. Our Church is wide awake to watch for chances, and she is not slow to seize upon all that present themselves. To-day, one of our strongest influences is the education of Protestant children, especially girls, who, after a few years in our schools, accept our doctrines, are imbued with our spirit, and go out to be wives and mothers and bring their husbands and children into our Church. And, my dear lady, this petting, this persuading which you deprecate, win for us the hearts of these pupils."

"And what are we to do for Elleanore?" queried Mrs. Duval with some symptoms of impatience.

The priest smiled—he was old. Since he

came from France to the United States he had seen the Roman Catholic religion making vast advances by such small and quiet steps as Mrs. Duval's eagerness could hardly brook, and he believed that much greater advances were to be made in this same way; his hopes looked forward to a day when, concealment needed no longer, his Church, standing at the point where she desired to be, could stretch forth her hands, grasping the rod of authority and the cross of faith, and rule the nation by her proud "I will." All this might be in years to come, when he was dust, but Father Munot was so thoroughly a zealot that it cheered him to think his Church should be supreme above the earth wherein his bones were crumbling to ashes.

"What shall we do for Elleanor?" asked Mrs. Duval again.

"I will visit her, you must visit her, your daughters must seek her society, you must have her at your house. It may be presented to her as a duty to visit her grandmother. A word dropped now and then in her presence may have

great effect; we may arrange for other efforts when a suitable time offers.

"Well," said Mrs. Duval, with a sigh, "as you say, sir; but it would take centuries to influence Elleanore in this way."

"She must be different from other girls, then," said the priest.

"She is different," replied Mrs. Duval: "she is as obstinate as only a Marvin knows how to be; she has a powerful mind, and has been instructed very carefully on this very point, until her head is full of Protestant folly, and she thinks there is nothing else reliable under the sun."

"I must have better acquaintance with this remarkable young woman," said Father Munot.

The day following this conversation, Mrs. Duval's three daughters appeared at Dr. Grant's.

"We have wanted so much to see you, Elleanore," said Victoria. "If cousins cannot be friends, who can be?"

"Yes," cried Eugenia; "I do not know whom we like better than our cousin Elleanore;" and

here is Violet—she talks about you continually, and we could not leave her at home. Why have you not been to see us, Elleanore?”

Elleanore was somewhat embarrassed. “I do not visit much,” she answered.

“But part of your little visiting ought to be to us,” said Victoria.

“We will not ask why you have not come; we will let the past go, and all do better in the future,” exclaimed Eugenia. “Grandmother talks of you so much, and wants so to see you. Mother said this morning if you knew how grandma fretted for you, and how short a time she is likely to live, you would not neglect her.”

These words smote Elleanore to the heart; she felt that she had neglected her grandmother and been unkind to her cousins. “I’ll come, girls; I ought to have done so before, but I really have not thought of it.”

“Come on Saturday to tea,” said Victoria.

“I will, if Mrs. Grant is willing.”

“Pshaw!” said Victoria; “you are old enough to do as you please.”

"As long as I am here," said Elleanore, decidedly, "I shall consult Mrs. Grant in all things as if she were my mother."

"I am sure that is right," said Eugenia, who had more tact than her sister. "I am glad to hear you say so, but of course Mrs. Grant will think it your duty to visit your relatives, especially poor grandma."

Old Mrs. Marvin did indeed seem glad to see Elleanore on Saturday. The old lady was in her room, which she seldom left, and she sent for Elleanore to come and sit with her for a while. They were left alone together, for no one suspected how the faith of the aged Catholic was tottering.

"Did your mother die happy, Elleanore?" asked Mrs. Marvin.

"Very happy, grandma."

"And she held to what she always believed?"

"Yes, grandma—she died happy, because she trusted in Christ alone."

"Dear me!" said the old lady: "I wish I were in her place."

"You can be just as happy if you look to Christ," said Elleanore.

"I'm trying, I'm trying," said her grandmother.

Elleanore believed her grandmother was striving to throw off the shackles of her ancient superstition and look to Christ only; she saw her feeble, timid, ignorant, anxious, and her whole soul was moved to pity. This old grandmother was the bond between Elleanore and the rest of the family; for her sake she began to go frequently to her aunt Duval's, and at every visit there was opportunity to drop some word of encouragement, and Elleanore only could comfort Mrs. Marvin; none but Elleanore knew that she needed comfort; they thought her sickly, peevish, old-fashioned and odd—nothing more; they did not recognize the anxious soul, fearing death, burdened by sin, and groping darkly for help.

Once or twice Elleanore met Father Munot at her aunt's: he was courteous, and indeed it seemed quite impossible for him to be otherwise;

but he made no attempt to enter into conversation with her, and confined the few words he spoke to the most general topics. By this course Mrs. Duval was somewhat nettled. Elleanore was relieved, and began to conclude that she was an object of less interest to her father's Church than she had supposed.

It was therefore a subject of some surprise to Elleanore when, being told one afternoon by Mrs. Grant's servant that there was a gentleman in the parlor desiring to see her, instead of Mr. Bradford or Mr. Reyburn, she found Father Munot.

"Where others claiming to be ministers come without apology, or other explanation than their profession affords," said the father, with a gracious bow, "it is not necessary that I should try to vindicate my visit. You are interesting to me for many reasons. I see in you the child of those whom I regarded with friendship; you bear the name of a family that has belonged to my flock since I came to this country, now more than twenty years; I see in you, also, a young and or-

phaned girl—a girl of powerful mind—a mind I would not willingly see in error.”

“I thank you for the interest you express, Father Munot,” replied Elleanore; “but though I am young, I have unalterably chosen my Church and rest with the fullest confidence in a creed I believe to be right.”

“My dear child,” said the father, earnestly, “when did anybody ever hold to a religion they believed to be wrong? We fly to a creed for safety, and if we are convinced it is false, we abandon it. As long as I see you holding your present faith, I shall know you believe it to be right, but I do not despair of convincing you that it is false, and so forcing you to take refuge in another. I desire to address myself to your understanding, knowing you are capable of following an argument.”

“Sir,” answered Elleanore, “it has pleased God not to convince my head alone, but my *heart*. I have by his mercy been convinced of sin and helped to make my refuge in Christ; and nothing shall ever tempt me to leave a refuge so

complete and delightful for any place of safety man has devised."

"I offer you nothing that man has devised," replied the priest, "but that holy Church which God himself has set for the saving of men."

"The Church," said Elleanore, "is but a collection of the followers of Jesus; and why I should leave Christ, the Head, to trust in any or all his members, I cannot divine."

"I do not ask you to leave Christ," said the father, "but to belong to him by being in that Church which he has set for the salvation of his children."

"As for that," said Elleanore, "I believe there is a universal Church, the true catholic Church, composed of all in the world, by whatever names they call themselves, who do heartily repent of sin and accept Christ as their Saviour; and a part of that Church I trust I am."

"Why lose yourself among a thousand small and wandering rills instead of resting on that mighty river, broad and pure and deep, that bears all upon it to eternal rest?"

"If by that river you refer to the Roman Church, I much question its purity. If all borne upon its current unfailingly enter into heaven, God's paradise must be full of those who, the Bible distinctly tells us, are without;" and taking up a little Bible that lay on the table near her, Elleanore coolly pointed to the fifteenth verse of the twenty-second chapter of Revelation: "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and adulterers, and whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie."

Father Munot knit his brows and asked sternly, "By these names do you characterize the members of our Holy Church?"

"Many of them, but not all," replied Elleanore. "I trust that in so large a body the Lord has not left himself without witnesses—humble and faithful spirits. But, you tell me *all* Roman Catholics are borne to eternal rest: indeed you can say nothing else, if you hold to baptismal regeneration. You must permit me to take the Bible standard, 'By their fruits ye shall know them;' and judging by fruits, I must find many of your

people utterly averse to God and his laws. I have observed that a very large proportion of our criminals are Roman Catholics; our robbers, murderers, incendiaries, even our vagrants and petty thieves are Catholics."

"And what do you argue from that?" demanded the priest, controlling himself with an effort.

"It is not wonderful to me that men sin so openly when confession and a trifling payment can obtain them absolution. I think in this your Church opens a wide door for the outgoings of our natural, corrupt hearts. I also argue that as most of these criminals are foreigners, they show the workings of governments inspired by the Romish Church—governments that are based on the ignorance and superstition of their subjects."

"These reasonings and reproaches against our Church," said Father Munot, "are hardly the result of your own observation; they are not original with a girl of your age."

"Granted that your supposition is correct,"

said Elleanore, "they yet are so evidently true that I accept them as my own."

"I am grieved and disappointed to find you so bitter and so obstinate," said Father Munot. "It certainly does not recommend *your* faith to me to find so young a person so opinionated, so deaf to all persuasion, so ready to throw reproaches on a Church that has for ages been the great light of the world."

"If I have said anything unjust or unkind," said Elleanore, "I sincerely beg your pardon. I have intended only to express myself so plainly, so decidedly, that you shall make no further attempts to change my belief."

"Then," said Father Munot, "you expect me, as a servant of God and the Church, to be led to abstain from trying to do you good by seeing how utterly deceived and deluded you are?"

"I beg you will leave me to my own teachers, who, you must admit, are children of God."

"I admit no such thing," said Father Munot, promptly. "You say you believe that in *my* Church the Lord has true servants; your remark

shows that even our worst enemies cannot speak entirely evil of us. I say that there is *no grace* in your Protestant Churches; you are *all* 'given over to strong delusion, that you may believe a lie.' Out of the one true Catholic Church, you have not a *single straw* to which you may cling for safety."

"We don't need straws," said Elleanore, bluntly; "we have the whole ark, even Christ Jesus, in whom we may all find security."

"You see," said the priest, paying no heed to this remark, "that while even in your enmity you are forced to give us some credit, justice and truth require that we should give *you none*."

"I give you this credit," replied Elleanore, "that in your zeal you are sincere, just as Paul, before his conversion, 'verily thought he did God service' in persecuting the Church of Christ."

"Our conversation has been sufficiently long for to-day," said Father Munot. "As is ever the case, the presentation of the truth has aroused the hostility of your sinful nature. This

is generally the first step, especially in those given, as you are, to relying on their own reason and proud of their intellectual power. The day may come when you and I shall look at all these matters from the same stand-point."

"Yes," said Elleanore, "if, as has sometimes happened, you forsake your present creed for a pure and simple Protestant faith." Having thus exercised her feminine privilege of having the last word, Elleanore bowed her guest out of the parlor, and when she heard the street-door close behind him, she ran up to her room to relieve her excited feelings by reviewing the whole conversation. One arrow from Father Munot's quiver had fastened in Elleanore's heart—she *was* given to "relying on her own reason, and *was* proud of her intellectual power." This was some of the old corrupt leaven yet working in her heart, hateful to herself when revealed thus clearly, and, she knew, hateful in the sight of God.

Elleanore had been much flattered by her teachers and companions, and her opinions had

been received with respect by those older and wiser than herself; and she was conscious of a secret pride in her own abilities.

"It is weak and contemptible," said Elleanore to herself; "and no wonder that Father Munot thinks if I have such a weak point as that, that I shall fall a prey to Romish delusions."

This little glimpse into her own heart was good for Elleanore; seeing her own weakness drove her closer to Him who is strong. She was more distrustful of herself, and, like all other Christians, became firmest when most fearing to fall.

As for Father Munot, he reported to Mrs. Duval that the "young heretic" was much firmer in her opinions than he had expected to find her. She had read and talked on the subject of the Church controversy, had a retentive memory, and entered into a dispute as if she had a keen relish for it.

"And do you give her up?" asked Mrs. Duval.

"By no means," said Father Munot.

"I don't mean entirely, of course; but do you give up these soft, coaxing measures?"

"Not yet," said the subtle father. "She is so fond of argument she may go too far in it. She is young; all young people have imagination, and we will appeal to that; she will be converted yet."

"You are very confident," said Mrs. Duval, dubiously.

Father Munot was indeed sanguine, and no wonder: frequent success in the past had made him hopeful for the future.

Elleanore mentioned Father Munot's visit to her cousin Eugenia, intimating that it had been disagreeable to her, and that she hoped it would not be repeated.

"Pooh!" said Eugenia, lightly. "I'm sure you can't blame the man for doing what he thinks is his duty. What sort of a priest would he be if he was not zealous for the increase of his Church?"

"If he desires to win me into it," said Elleanore.

nore, "he takes the wrong plan; he will succeed only in disgusting me."

"Still, he must do his duty, follow what is his calling, even if he *does* disgust you." urged Eugenia.

"I don't see any pleasure in *your* kind of religion," said Victoria. "Why you think it a sin to dance, or play cards, or drink wine, or go to masquerades or to the theatre. Dear, dear! how dull you must be!"

"I do not feel like doing any of these things," said Elleanore, sadly.

"Probably not just now, but, like all other young people, you will, when you are out of mourning; and then you will be shut out of all such amusements by your stiff Church, that says they are wicked. Now 'Genie and I can do all these things that we like, and read novels and all that, and then go to confession and get our minds settled up, and take communion as pure as new-born babies. I *have* thought it rather hard on Bridget, and that kind of folks, who have little money

and so much to pay that they can hardly buy a pair of shoes; but the *money* makes no difference to us, for mother's purse is always full."

"It is no recommendation of a religion to me," said Elleanore, "that it leaves us free to walk in our own ways: we ought to be glad to do something, to make some sacrifice for Jesus, who did so much for us."

"As to that," replied Eugenia, "our religion offers a lovely chance for sacrifice. You are at liberty to sacrifice the world, your friends, your fortune, your freedom, yourself to the Church; and by shutting yourself up in a convent to a life of self-denial, you can get to be a saint upon earth, and take a place in heaven far enough in advance of all the friends and relations you have sacrificed."

Elleanore thought there was a slight sneer in Eugenia's tone, and so indeed there was. Eugenia, like many another active mind fed on Papal pabulum, was on the verge of infidelity.

"Mother has often said you'd make a charming devotee," said Victoria. "Come, Elleanore put a stop to the fuss and turn Catholic, and take first the white veil, and then the black one." Victoria spoke lightly; all the world was a merry jest to the girl flattered and petted, and untouched as yet by a breath of sorrow.

"Do," said Eugenia, the sneer more open still, for the three girls were alone. "Do, and I'll be present at the ceremonies, and cry devoutly into my best cambric pocket handkerchief, and get to heaven on your good works, as I have none of my own. It's truly a cheering spectacle—a woman cutting herself off from all the domestic ties that we are told that God made, and shutting herself up like a caterpillar in a cocoon, with the remote hope of one day being a heavenly butterfly."

"I've been when they did it, and it's as good as the play," cried Victoria. "It makes me shiver all over to see them lie down in their coffin. Ugh! Elleanore, do turn; it would be splendid to see one's *own* relation going through

the ceremony—almost as good as doing it yourself.”

“Do be persuaded, Elleanore,” said the sneering Eugenia. “I’ve read about faith without works being dead. And that coffin always makes me think the faith and works are both dead. I’ve often wondered how it would be just to drop away into nothingness when one dies—when one expected to get first to purgatory and then to glory.”

“Oh, Eugenia!” cried the volatile Victoria, “don’t be so horrible. Who’s going to die at our age?”

That afternoon, after Elleanore had gone to her home, Mrs. Duval asked her daughters,

“Girls, do you mention religion to Elleanore, as I told you?”

“Yes, we mention it,” said Eugenia.

“And do you make anything of her?”

“I don’t,” said Victoria, practising airs and graces before the pier-glass. “I never made anything out of anybody, unless it is a doll out of myself.”

Mrs. Duval smiled graciously, and indeed almost any mother must of necessity have smiled at so charming a daughter as the pink-and-white, fragile, be-curled Victoria.

"I think she'll turn; it's quite impossible to think any one can resist such a delightful belief as our Church offers," said Eugenia. Mrs. Duval smiled again; Eugenia's caustic tone was accepted as wit by her doting parent.

Having no ambition to try her skill in argument with Father Munot, Elleanore declined to see him the next time he called, and he did not repeat his visit. Elleanore frequently wished that the priest were younger, for reverence to the aged had been one of her mother's earliest teachings.

Almost the first verse of Scripture Elleanore had learned was, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man." Had Father Munot been a young man or in the vigorous prime of his days, Elleanore could have disputed his arguments, and refused to see him when he called, with-

out that sense of regret with which she thought of the old priest's wrinkles and his silver hairs. These feelings gave a respectful grace—the deference that right-minded youth shows to age—to her manner toward the reverend Jesuit when she met him at her aunt's; and still Father Munot held to the quiet policy he had from the first advocated as best suited to bring Elleanore into the Church of Rome. A day would come when Father Munot would try another and severer plan.

Christmas drew near, and everybody was talking of the festal time. Mrs. Duval was preparing a Christmas tree.

"You must come the afternoon before Christmas, Elleanore, and stay all night to share our Christmas tree; and I have another treat in store for you. I shall take all you girls to a concert," said Mrs. Duval.

"Why, aunt!" exclaimed Elleanore, "I cannot go to a concert!"

"Of course, Elleanore, I should not ask you to transgress any rules of propriety," said Mrs.

Duval, with a serene air. "I trust I understand all the requirements of society. I was wrong to call this a *concert*; strictly speaking, it is not one, but it is a musical treat, such as is rarely offered, of organ music—sacred music—executed by the very best musical talent of the country; and I shall take Violet as well as the elder girls."

This was a temptation to Elleanore, who loved music passionately. However, she had firmly resolved that her intercourse with her aunt's family should be only such as relationship demanded and as duty to her old grandmother required; and she would by no means go out to any public place with them. Recalling these determinations, she replied:

"I thank you for the invitation, aunt: it sounds very tempting, but I am already engaged for that evening. Mrs. Reyburn is to have a Christmas tree, and I have promised to be there."

"What!" cried Victoria; "run off there, where you have no relations, and spoil all our plans, when we are to have such a splendid tree, and

are all to have a present for you, and when poor grandma is to come down, and will expect to see you, and get some little token from you, too," and Victoria pouted her pretty lips and scowled up her smooth brows and tried to look angry.

"As we are going to this — music,—whatever it is," said Eugenia, "we shall have our tree early, and you can come here before dark, and we will send you over to Mrs. Reyburn's in the carriage, when we are ready to go to our —music."

"Yes," said Mrs. Duval; "if you *must* divide your time, you can do as Eugenia proposes." She had been thinking intently while her daughters were speaking, and now her face grew brighter, and she went on to speak of the Christmas tree.

"I shall spare no expense to make this tree a perfect gem. I have it all arranged in my mind, just how it shall look to please our tastes, and also to remind us of the occasion we celebrate."

"I'm sure Mrs. Reyburn's tree will be no thing to it," said Victoria.

"Which reflection will doubtless make ours still more beautiful," said Eugenia; "just as it adds to our relish of turkey to think that other folks are starving for salt pork."

"Really, Eugenia," said her mother, "you have the strangest way of *putting things*."

"Is it so, mamma?" said Eugenia: "it must be a trait I come honestly by, as I just had the same thought of yourself when you talked about the—music."

Elleanore thought nothing of this remark, nor did she notice the slight red that tinged Mrs. Duval's cheek at Eugenia's words.

"Who is to put the presents on your tree?" asked Elleanore.

"I am to have the whole arrangement of it," said Mrs. Duval, "and no one is to see it until it is lighted."

"Try and have room then for a few trifles I shall send down for it," said Elleanore.

"Yes, indeed," said Victoria, "we shall have room for all that comes."

Elleanore longed to offer her grandmother a

gift suited to her state of mind, and her ingenuity, or perhaps her affection, suggested what she thought might be fitting. Among Mrs. Reyburn's protégés was a young girl, a cripple, skillful in painting. Elleanore procured a sheet of Bristol board, and had the hymn, "My faith looks up to Thee," beautifully printed upon it. She then had the cripple paint about it an illustrative border of really exquisite design, and then the whole was put in the choicest frame Elleanore could find in the city.

For her aunt and cousins she purchased various fancy articles which she thought would suit their several tastes.

Mrs. Duval scrutinized the gift for old Mrs. Marvin very carefully; she characterized it as "so queer," and called Eugenia and Victoria to examine it with her.

"Dear me, what a very stupid present!" said Victoria; "and yet it is elegantly gotten up, and must have cost a good deal."

"I suppose she didn't know what to get for old folks who does?" said Eugenia.

"Well," said Mrs. Duval, taking a final look at the illustrations in the border, "I don't know as there is any harm in it; and it is hard choosing a present for your grandmother, who has all that heart could wish."

On the afternoon before Christmas, Elleanore went to Mrs. Duval's. "Now, aunt," she said, "if it will not be convenient for you to send me over to Mrs. Reyburn's by eight o'clock, I will go there before dark."

"We shall be ready to leave here before eight," said Mrs. Duval.

"What is there so wonderful about Mr. Reyburn's tree, that you are so anxious about it?" cried Victoria.

"It is not the *tree* so much, but there are to be six poor children there, who all are to have a merry Christmas for the first time in their lives, and are to have things to take home."

"I can't see anything so attractive in ~~that~~," said Victoria, who was not one of those blessed "that consider the poor."

"No," said Eugenia, "it is quite enough to

take the edge off one's appetite to think of so many getting fed."

But now supper was ready, and after supper the doors of the parlors were thrown open, and the grand Christmas tree was presented to all eyes. It was a tall and beautifully shaped tree, gleaming with a hundred little wax tapers, and under it two dolls representing the Virgin and child. The waxen figure of Mary, dressed in gorgeous array, certainly must have borne little resemblance to the lowly maiden of Nazareth, while the effigy of the child, decked in lace and tinsel, was a miserable mockery of that babe who, wrapped in "swaddling bands," lay in a manger. Over the little gilded manger and the waxen dolls towered the tree laden with lights and with gifts. Prayer books and crucifixes were prominent among the gifts, one of each being presented to each of the servants of the house.

The gifts distributed, the ladies made ready to set out for their evening's entertainment. As Elleanore entered the dining-room for a moment to look for her handkerchief, she noticed that an

inviting collation was already set out for the refreshment of the party when they should return home. It was nearly eight o'clock, and Elleanore being anxious to get to Mrs. Reyburn's, was pleased to hear her aunt's voice summoning the girls to the carriage.

The merry chatter of Victoria, and the necessity of replying to her numerous inquiries, made the moments pass swiftly as they drove along the streets of the city, but at last Elleanore thought they were taking an unusually long time to get to Mrs. Reyburn's, especially as they were riding rapidly. She looked out of the window—the streets were brilliantly lighted. "Why, aunt!" she exclaimed, "you are not taking me to Mrs. Reyburn's!"

"No," cried Victoria, clapping her hands, "you are to have a good time and see the sights in spite of yourself. You can tell Mrs. Reyburn that you could not go to her house because we carried you off."

Just then the carriage stopped where crowds were pressing into the Church of the Holy Vir-

gin, where Mrs. Duval and her family were accustomed to attend service.

"I prefer to go to Mrs. Reyburn's," said Elleanore, coldly.

"Come, girls, let us get in as soon as possible," said Mrs. Duval.

"Aunt, will you give orders to have me taken to Mrs. Reyburn's, as you promised?" said Elleanore.

"Be good enough to leave the carriage," said Mrs. Duval. "I am giving you a rare treat, though you do not seem to appreciate it."

The four girls stepped on the pavement and Mrs. Duval dismissed the carriage. This she did to ensure Elleanore's remaining at the church.

"Our pew will be so full, mamma," said Victoria, "I will go with the Lafins;" and she joined a group of acquaintances.

Mrs. Duval led the way into the church, holding Violet by the hand; Elleanore stepped behind Eugenia, and thus they proceeded to a locked pew belonging to the family. As they had passed down the crowded aisle, they

took their places in the pew, Elleanore by the door; at this arrangement Mrs. Duval frowned.

The church presented a singular and gorgeous spectacle: it was beautifully decorated with evergreens, that wreathed the graceful pillars and hung in rich festoons, or climbed about the windows, which bore on their stained glass many a representation of saint and virgin—Saint Agnes and her lamb being held up to sinners, rather than the “Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world;” and Saint Catherine and her roses, instead of the “Rose of Sharon.”

The air was loaded with perfume from a splendid variety of hot-house flowers; the grand altar blazed with light, and cushions and altar-cloths shone in embroidery of silver and gold, wrought by lonely women, who have in profession abjured all the follies and vanities of the world. Through all the church sounded rich strains of music, drawn from the organ by practiced hands; the gallery held a choir of well-trained singers, and about the altar

and through the chancel, and to and from the vestry, passed the priests. Central of all the display were life-sized figures of the Virgin and child, wearing such wonderful apparel as surely never entered the thoughts of the lowly Jewess to whom the angel Gabriel appeared in Galilee.

Elleanore looked intently from one showy trapping to another—at priests and singers and gazing crowd—and her aunt began to congratulate herself on having achieved a victory and won the girl's admiration; the first step, she thought, in her being led wholly captive by the splendors of Rome. These were before the days when Ritualism was rampant, and Elleanore was secretly congratulating herself on the conviction that all these mummeries were eschewed by those professing Protestantism. Truly it will be a cheering time to all such upholsterers, dealers in dry goods and venders of fancy wares as care only for the gains of this world, when all denominations shall find it necessary to set forth with such access-

ries of dress and ornaments the religion of Him who was "despised and rejected of men, who had no beauty that we should desire him—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

May God raise up some Isaiah to cry out against "the bravery of tinkling ornaments, the jewels, the changeable suits of apparel and the mantles," particularly when made a part of religious services.

So quiet and interested had Elleanore been that Mrs. Duval, relieved of anxiety about her conduct, had turned her attention to a display that was so pleasing to her, when suddenly she discovered that the corner of the seat was vacant, and Elleanore was already making her way out of the house through the crowds that thronged the aisles.

Mrs. Duval half started from her seat, excitedly resolved to do something, but Eugenia whispered, "For mercy's sake, mother, do let her go; it will make such a stir and fuss if you do or say anything; she is able to take care of herself."

"Why in the world did you let her go?" asked Mrs. Duval, impatiently.

"I'm sure I'm not her keeper," replied Eugenia.

Elleanore meanwhile eagerly pressed out of the vestibule, flushed and vexed. She found a hack which had just brought a group to see the spectacle at the church, and having engaged the driver to take her to Mr. Reyburn's, she stepped into the carriage and sank back on the cushions with a sense of relief.

It was after nine when she reached her friends, and she found the house full of "peace and good-will," with all the wonted joy of the season, though there was some wondering at her non-appearance. The poor children, who formed a Sabbath-school class which Mrs. Reyburn had gathered from a few destitute families not far from her house, had reached their teacher's home at seven o'clock—had partaken of a plentiful supper of fried chicken, cakes, preserves and biscuit, which some ladies of Mr. Reyburn's congregation had assisted in

providing. They had then rejoiced in a Christmas tree whereon were little bags of fruit and candy, books, toys, and small articles of clothing, not only for themselves, but for their families at home; and now, when Elleanore arrived, these happy children were in the parlor singing their Sunday-school hymns, while Edna Reyburn accompanied them on her piano.

"I thought you'd never come!" cried little Elsie as Elleanore entered the parlor. "We want you to play and sing for us!"

"You are late," said Mr. Reyburn, holding up his watch and shaking his head.

"I had good reason for my tardiness," said Elleanore. "Where is Mrs. Reyburn?"

"She's in the kitchen," shouted Bob, his face aglow with delight, "packing baskets."

"I will come and sing for you presently," said Elleanore, loosening her hand from Elsie's clasp and running down to the basement. Mrs. Reyburn seemed no less charming here than she had been in the light robes of summer in

which we first made her acquaintance perhaps her occupation lent her an additional charm this Christmas evening, for, assisted by a friend who was visiting her, and by the cook, she was putting in each of six baskets materials for a Christmas dinner which should gladden six poor homes. Elleanore stood watching the placing in each basket of mince-pie, meat, bread and potatoes, and presently said, "Well, I've seen two different ways of serving God this evening; this is one, and I'll tell you about the other by and by, though I doubt if what I refer to *can* be called the service of God; it is idolatry rather."

"Run up to the parlor now, Elleanore, and make them glad with your gifts, and then we must send them home, for our own children will want to see their Christmas tree, and it is late."

Elleanore returned to the parlor, where she gave to each of the children a two-dollar bill, to give to the mothers who worked and waited at home: truly long were remembered the good gifts of that Christmas.

"What are you thinking of?" Mrs. Reyburn asked Elleanore, who stood in a pleasant muse as the children trooped off to the kitchen to get their baskets.

"Oh how good it is to have money!—one can be so happy in using it."

"May God help you always to use your money as a faithful steward," said Mr. Reyburn.

The little girls did not go home alone; two well-pleased fathers came for the little ones, and Mr. Reyburn's servant went with them also; they reached their homes safe and happy, the Christmas evening promising to be a bright memory to them for all their future lives.

After the little guests were gone the back parlor was thrown open, and the Reyburn family collected to admire their own Christmas tree and receive its gifts, their enjoyment heightened by the pleasure they had conferred upon others.

It was some time after this Christmas eve before Elleanore went to her aunt's; not indeed until, in March, her grandmother sent for her. Eugenia had called upon her once or twice, mak-

ing no allusion to Christmas eve, and as none of the family asked her to come to visit them, Elleanore judged that they were angry, and not unwilling to dispense with her acquaintance.

Mrs. Duval was indeed angry with her niece, and it required all Father Munot's powers of argument and persuasion to induce her to let matters move quietly along for a time. Father Munot did not expect to let matters "go quietly" always. Elleanore was too rich a prize to be allowed to escape the grasp of Rome, but the father's plans were not yet matured. He met Elleanore on the street on Christmas day; and supposing her to have remained during all the services at the "Church of the Holy Virgin"—for he had seen her come in, but had not noticed her departure—he asked her, "What did you think of our worship in celebration of the holy evening?"

"Contrasting what I saw at your church, Father Munot, with what I saw at Mr. Reyburn's house, I felt more strongly than ever that while the Protestant Church feeds and

clothes her poor, the Roman Catholic Church robs and strips hers, that she may possess the means for making a vain display—to blind them with glitter rather than enlighten them with truth,” replied Elleanore.”

“Misguided girl!” said Father Munot, angrily, “how little do you know of the spirit of our Church!”

“Little as I know, that little is enough, and I desire not to know more of it,” answered the tenacious Elleanore.





CHAPTER V.

MARCH came, and brought warm air and sunny days, a swelling of buds on the trees, and a fresh green stealing over the sod—promise of the blooming spring.

Elleanore had entered her seventeenth year; there was no time for delay. While Mrs. Duval and Father Munot wished many a time that the girl's mother had died years before, and left her daughter with a mind less matured for them to influence, they felt that each day was adding firmness to her opinions and strength to her will, and what they had to do to underwine her Protestantism must be done quickly. Behold now their first grand move.

On a Wednesday afternoon, about four o'clock, Elleanore Marvin and many of her young companions left, books in hand, their school-room.

The house where they attended school was on a retired and pleasant street of old-fashioned buildings, and there was in it little stir of passers-by. As they came down the steps they saw a carriage stopped near them, and its driver on the sidewalk, looking here and there as if in search of some place or person.

"Miss, can you tell me if Miss Marvin is among you young ladies?" the man asked one of the smaller girls.

The little girl promptly pointed out Elleanore, and the man went up to her. She stood apart from her companions, and he said, hurriedly, "Your grandmother is dying, and wants you; your aunt sent the carriage, and says don't delay one minute."

Thinking only of her dying grandmother, Elleanore turned to her school-mate, Laura Hill, saying, "Here, Laura, take my books, I'll call for them," and sprang into the carriage, the door of which the man held open. The driver jumped on his seat and drove rapidly away.

About six o'clock that afternoon, while Mrs.

Grant sat by her parlor window, wondering at the absence of Elleanore, who always returned home as soon as school closed, the servant came in, saying, "Here's Benny Hill, just brought Miss Elleanore's books; he says his sister bid him bring them here."

"She must be stopping there," said Mrs. Grant, and rose to ask Benny, but he had already gone home. At tea-time, when the doctor asked for his ward, Mrs. Grant told him what she knew of her absence, saying, "Elleanore never went anywhere before without telling me."

"It's rather odd," said the doctor.

"I wish she were home," said Mrs. Grant.

After tea the doctor was called off to a patient, and Mrs. Grant sat trying to knit, and thinking of Elleanore, until her anxiety rose to such a height that she could no longer remain quiet. She rang the bell. "Charlotte," she said to the girl, "tell James to go to Mr. Hill's and ask if Miss Elleanore wishes him to bring her home now or later, or if she wants to stay there to-night?"

Three-quarters of an hour passed slowly by, and at last James returned, saying, the Hill family had all gone to a panorama.

For a few minutes Mrs. Grant was comforted; then she began to think that Elleanore had been to no place of amusement since her mother's death; that she would hardly go out for an evening in her school-hat and cloak; nor, being in mourning, could she be supplied by Laura Hill; again she sent for her servant man.

"James, be good enough to go to Mr. Hill's and ask if Miss Elleanore has been there this evening, and if she has gone to the panorama with the family."

Again the dreary waiting, during which old Mrs. Grant paced the parlor, and then James came in with the information, "Miss Elleanore is not gone with them, and she has not been there to-day."

"What shall I do?" cried Mrs. Grant, in distress.

It was now about ten o'clock. The doctor was still absent. Mrs. Grant dreaded to occasion

remarks by sending about after her charge at that time of night; she reasoned with herself that there must have been some message left with the school-books that had not been given; that Elleanore had many friends with whom she might have been persuaded to stay; and Mrs. Grant did not like to make herself ridiculous by over-anxiety: Elleanore was surely old enough to take care of herself. Striving to calm herself with these thoughts, Mrs. Grant had the house closed and allowed her servants to retire, though she sat up until midnight, hoping to hear Elleanore ring, and then retired to bed, though not to sleep. It was after two when the doctor returned home, and his wakeful wife related to him her anxieties.

“Dear me! It’s very singular!” cried the doctor, moving here and there and pulling his coat off and on several times. “Well, well, we must wait till morning; we cannot rouse our friends now, it may be for a false alarm,” and so saying the weary physician went to his bed, and was soon in a sound slumber.

Before breakfast a messenger had been sent to

Mrs. Reyburn's to look for Elleanor she was not there.

"When breakfast is over, I'll go to Hill's myself and see Laura," said the doctor, but while he was eating Mrs. Reyburn came in.

"I felt anxious, and came to see if anything is the matter," she said.

Mrs. Grant had just given a full history of her troubles, and the doctor was pushing back his plate, the signal that he had finished his breakfast, when James came in :

"You're wanted in a hurry, doctor, to a lady in a fit."

"That's the way it goes!" cried the doctor; "not one blessed minute to attend to my own business or look after my ward. I ought never to have taken her in charge. Mrs. Reyburn, you help Mrs. Grant hunt that girl up, and if you can't find her, call Mr. Manners to help; he's a lawyer and can find out anybody or anything." Away went the doctor, and Mrs. Reyburn volunteered to go home, and, having put herself in readiness for as long a walk as might be called

for, to go over to Laura Hill's to see if she knew where Elleanore was.

"I should think nothing of this absence in almost any other girl," said Mrs. Reyburn

"Nor I," said Mrs. Grant, "but Elleanore is not like other girls—she is so punctual and particular."

Various necessary duties of the mother and housekeeper detained Mrs. Reyburn, so that Laura had gone to school when Mrs. Reyburn went to the house; the lady therefore proceeded to the school. The morning session had begun, but the seat of Elleanore, the prompt pupil, was vacant. The teacher, hearing Mrs. Reyburn's story, became anxious, and questioned all the day-scholars. On one point they all agreed: Elleanore had driven off somewhere without any explanation of her object. But here the testimony divided; one said she went in a private carriage; another said a hack; the smallest of the pupils even ventured to guess it might have been an omnibus. It was, on different testimonies, a new carriage, an old one, a little one, a handsome one;

had one horse, two horses, black, white bay brown, sorrel or piebald horses. Then as to the coachman, he was in livery—no, a common cabman—black, white, tall, short, thin, stout—in black, in brown, in rags: he must, according to all these witnesses have been a human chameleon.

Mrs. Reyburn was in despair: she went for Mr. Manners, and then with him returned to Mrs. Grant's. Elleanore had not made her appearance, and after a short consultation, questioning who were her friends and what her visiting places, the two were about to go out for further search, when on the steps they met Mrs. Duval in high excitement.

"Where is Elleanore?" she cried.

"We do not know," replied Mrs. Reyburn.

"I thought guardians were expected to look after their wards and keep informed as to their whereabouts," said Mrs. Duval, darting a severe look at Mr. Manners.

"A guardian cannot carry his ward in his pocket like his watch," said Mr. Manners, tersely.

"How did you hear Elleanore was gone?" asked Mrs. Reyburn.

"I called at her school-room to suggest to her that she should be more dutiful in visiting her grandmother, and I heard of her being gone somewhere, from her teacher, who seemed quite distressed."

"Have your daughters seen nothing of her?" asked Mr. Manners.

"My daughters have been absent in New York for two weeks, and expect to stay there five or six weeks longer," replied Mrs. Duval.

The two stood on Doctor Grant's front steps, looking up and down the street, as if expecting to see Elleanore coming in sight.

"Well!" cried Mrs. Duval, impatiently; "it is of no use idling here. Have you been to the Hurds, or Lyles, or Grahams?—they are all her acquaintances."

"No," said Mrs. Reyburn, "we have just begun to look for her."

"We do not wish to be premature in our search, and create inquiries and remarks about

Elleanore: she has been gone but a short time, and may return and give a good account of herself," said Mr. Manners.

"Were it any other girl than Elleanore, we might think her off on a visit; but she is so particular always to mention where she is going even for a call, that I am very uneasy about her," said Mrs. Reyburn.

"So am I," said Mrs. Duval. "My poor brother's only child is very dear to me. I cannot rest until she is found. Suppose I go out on a calling expedition, and inquire wherever Elleanore is in the habit of visiting. Many of the places I am accustomed to call at, and at the few others I can plead some charity or so on as an excuse; and I can find out if she has been heard of without making any stir."

"That will be an excellent plan," said Mr. Manners, cordially; "the less we say about this just now the better."

"If I find her," said Mrs. Duval, "I shall not spare my reproofs of her thoughtlessness and lack of discretion."

"I will go to see her music-teacher," said Mrs. Reyburn. "Elleanore is very fond of her, and may be there. Miss Preston may be ill, and have kept Elleanore with her."

"Perhaps so," said Mrs. Duval; "and as my brother, John Marvin, and my sister, Mrs. Thorn, live near Miss Preston's boarding-place, you might stop at their houses and ask for her."

Several arrangements of this kind having been made, the ladies and Mr. Manners separated to look for Elleanore. Mrs. Grant meantime searched in Elleanore's room for a letter, note or other token, such as persons who have resolved on making a disappearance are supposed generally to leave behind them for the consolation of their friends. In vain: Elleanore's neatly-arranged room, her Bible, her hymn-book and Daily Food laid on her table, her work half-finished in the basket, her dress laid ready for evening, gave no evidence of an intended absence, and Mrs. Grant sat down on Elleanore's low rocking-chair with a sad heart and tearful eyes

Miss Preston was absent, but the servant told Mrs. Reyburn that no young lady had been at the house for two days. Mrs. Reyburn then called on Mrs. John Marvin.

"Our niece is not here, nor have we seen her since last fall," replied Mrs. Marvin, Jr., an austere-looking woman; "her mother treated us all in a very improper manner, and we care nothing for Elleanore's further acquaintance."

"And you know nothing of her?"

Nothing whatever," replied the lady, in an offended tone.

Mrs. Thorn, who had once been Miss Fannie Marvin, was next visited.

She was a small, simpering, volatile woman. In reply to Mrs. Reyburn's question, she cried,

"Elleanore here! Mercy, no! not for the world. Sister says she is one of the most set, stiff, obstinate little heretics that ever lived: why, I am afraid of her influence over the children to such an extent that I don't even ask her to call. Her grandmother seems to think a good

deal of her, but I never liked her mother, and I'd hardly know the girl if I saw her."

This was not encouraging, and Mrs. Reyburn returned to Mrs. Grant's. It was long after lunch-time; no Elleanore had come. Mrs. Duval stepped in about four o'clock, declaring she was "jaded out and worried to death—had left her old mother all alone with the servants, and must go home, though she should not sleep a wink." By the time she had said all this to Mrs. Grant and Mrs. Reyburn, the lawyer and doctor entered, and Mrs. Duval, announcing that she was "nearly distracted," detailed how she had read of "several instances lately in New York and other cities, where young ladies had been spirited away and never heard of after, and she thought she should send for her daughters to come home immediately, or at least warn them to be very careful."

Several days passed on; the newspapers stated that a young lady, an orphan of high family and large wealth, was missing; and headed the notice with the words "MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE."

Mr. Manne.s had taxed his ingenuity to the utmost to find some clew to his ward's hiding-place; he had questioned Elleanore's school-mates to such an extent that the younger ones half believed he held them guilty of carrying their school-fellow off; and now the matter was in the hands of the detectives, who daily reported that they "had learned nothing further."

Mr. Manners came near losing lawsuits, and the doctor patients, on account of the anxiety of minds that, over papers and patients, were yet engaged with Elleanore.

And now where was Elleanore, who had been whisked off in a coach, like a maiden in a fairy tale? Where indeed was she?

We return to the day when Elleanore and her companions left their school-room and found the carriage waiting by the sidewalk. It was a plain and long-used livery carriage, driven by the sexton of the "Church of the Holy Virgin." This carriage left Elleanore at her aunt's door and drove away.

Bridget met Elleanore at the door, and led

her up to a room on the second floor. It was a back room, with a smaller room opening from it; no one was there, but Bridget, saying that she would call Mrs. Duval, withdrew. Eleonore sat waiting her aunt's entrance with some impatience.

She noticed that the room wherein she was had been changed from a bed-chamber to a sort of sitting-room. There was a table near the window, well supplied with books, a melodeon and some sheets of music, an embroidery frame and a work-basket; in one corner of the apartment was a silk curtain, and before it a velvet-colored piece of furniture, which she had often heard her aunt call a *prie-dieu*.

The room did not lack for ornament: there was a stand of flowers growing in handsome pots, placed where the blossoms could catch what sunlight fell in at the window, and that they might also hide the uninviting prospect of bare brick walls and the paved back yard; a cage with a canary in it swung from a hook above the flowers, and on a small stand was

the pretty prison of a gaudy macaw. The walls of the room were decorated with several pictures—one an engraving of the Sistine Madonna; another a copy of Raphael's Madonna and Child. The door to the inner room was ajar, and Elleanore saw that it was arranged tastefully as a sleeping apartment.

At last her aunt entered: she saluted Elleanore kindly, and to the young girl's eager inquiries after the old lady, she replied that she was "about the same and asleep. Lay off your things, Elleanore, and you shall make her happy by going in to see her as soon as she wakes up."

"Why, aunt!" exclaimed Elleanore, "the man who drove the carriage said my grandmother was dying and I must come quickly."

"Another proof," said Mrs. Duval, coolly, unfastening Elleanore's coat, "that a message or a rumor gathers much as it goes from lip to lip. I sent my servant to the livery stable-keeper, and he repeated the message to his man, and so by going through three or four editions

the simple statement I made has been greatly magnified. I said your grandmother was ill, and anxious to see you. She often asks for you, especially now that my girls are gone; and as she has had several attacks of fainting recently, I sent for you to gratify her. You are remiss in your attentions to her, Elleanore."

They were seated by this time, and Mrs. Duval, looking about the room, said with some satisfaction. "I think I have made a very pretty place of this."

"You have indeed," replied Elleanore.

"I do not think any one could accuse me of penuriousness or selfishness in preparing this place for my child or dearest friend."

"Certainly not; it has both comfort and luxury." Elleanore then asked after her cousins, and her aunt read a letter just received from them. Soon, however, she returned to the subject first discussed—the room.

"I have often thought, when reading of prisoners and their doleful lives, if just some such mild, quiet, refined sort of place as this

had been their prison, they would have been happy enough."

"Oh no," said Elleanore; "no gilding and padding can endear prison bars."

"Yet," urged her aunt, "one held in such gentle captivity as this room would suggest, should think of the innumerable prisoners in dungeons, jails, castles, high, hot towers, and damp, dark vaults, and reflecting on such troubles, forget their own small vexations."

"Yes," said Elleanore, indifferently, "I suppose it is possible to be *comparatively* happy anywhere."

"Then again," said her aunt, "imprisonment may be for the ultimate advantage and happiness of the individual—a friendly durance that they shall learn to see by and by as a blessing; and their keepers may be seen in the light of their wisest and kindest friends."

"I can imagine such a case *possible*, yet unusual enough to be romantic," said Elleanore; "but I wonder if grandma is not yet awake? Had I not better go to her?"

‘ We will go and see,” replied Mrs. Duval, and they proceeded to the old lady’s room.

The March day closed as Elleanore lingered by her grandmother’s bedside, and, warned by the deepening shadows, she prepared to depart. After bidding the aged invalid good-bye, she returned with her aunt to the room where she had left her hood and cloak.

The round table in the centre of the room was spread as for a supper for two.

“ You and I will have our tea here,” said Mrs. Duval, seating Elleanore at one side of the table and taking her own place opposite her. Elleanore could not refuse to tarry for a while, though she felt that Mrs. Grant would be anxious at her delay. After they had taken tea, Elleanore said: “ And now, aunt, I have had such a pleasant visit that I shall soon come again. Please let me have my things, and let Bridget go with me to Dr. Grant’s.”

Mrs. Duval was silent for a moment; her whole manner changed. She became cold, grave, forbidding. “ Elleanore,” she demanded, “ answer

me one question : Will you return to the religion of your fathers, the Church of your family—to the Church where, by all rights, you belong ?”

“Aunt,” said Elleanore, “I thought *that* question was for ever settled, and never to be revived between us.”

“Do you suppose,” went on Mrs. Duval, with increasing excitement, “that I can stand quietly by and see you peril your soul, and divert the fortune your father laid up to uses for which he never intended it? Shall I see you in the hands of heretics, with false teachers and lying creeds and heretical books, to utterly pervert your young mind, and yet interpose no means to hinder this ruin of your soul and worse than waste of your fortune?”

“Do not distress yourself, aunt,” replied Elleanore, “about what you cannot possibly help.”

“I can make an effort to help it, and that I am in duty bound to do. I know that here, in this country, all natural claims can be set aside, and a father leave his child solely to his wife’s

guardianship, and that wife leave the child to strangers, mocking at the natural right of the father's family and the father's Church to protect his child. But now you are in my house, and here I shall hold you. I have arranged these rooms for you, and you should acknowledge the kindness that, in your own words, has provided both comfort and luxury. Here are books setting forth the faith you have scorned to study: you shall not perish for lack of knowledge. Here are all the incentives to devotion—everything that can aid in promoting a devout frame of mind. Emulate those holy sisters, one of whom I still hope to see you. Spend your hours in study and prayer, and be sure that the Church will ever be ready to accept your penitence and own you as a child."

"Aunt," said Elleanore, rising, "you are insane. Your words have no wisdom in them. I am, indeed, in your house, but I now leave it never to come here again. The strong arm of the law is my protection from your wild schemes

"And that same strong arm of the law it must be, Elleanore," replied Mrs. Duval, her voice trembling from excitement at the daring of her course, "that shall take you from this house without my consent. I shall hold you here with a love that dreads no dangers, so that I may save your soul."

Elleanore glanced about: her wrappings were gone, but it was better to go alone, bareheaded and cloakless, to her guardian's than to remain at her aunt's a captive.

With a flashing eye she walked to the door. Mrs. Duval, standing and clasping with nervous energy the back of her chair, watched her movements. Elleanore grasped the handle of the door to open it, but found it fastened.

"Aunt," she exclaimed indignantly, "open this door and let me go!"

"Never, Elleanore! never, child! until you have learned to repent your obstinacy and confess yourself a daughter of the only true Church; then not one of my own daughters shall be dearer—you shall be free as air."

"Free!" cried Elleanore, "free in the shackles of the Church of Rome—the Church that explores the secret thoughts of hearts, that respects no domestic privacy, no sacredness of friendship; that makes its votaries traitors to every tie of honor and hospitality! If your conduct is a specimen of what the Church of Rome cultivates, I hope ever to keep far from it."

"You may come to a better mind," said Mrs. Duval. "You shall at least have time and means to do so."

"Do you know what you are doing?" cried Elleanore. "Do you know you render yourself amenable to the law in thus keeping me a prisoner against my will?"

"I know that I am pursuing a plan that has often proved successful, and may prove so now," said Mrs. Duval. "I shall brave any possible danger for the sake of doing you good." Having said this, Mrs. Duval left the place by the table which she had occupied, went into the adjacent bed-room, and the next moment the closing of a door and the speedy turning of a key informed

Elleanore that she was alone—a captive in the two apartments.

“I won’t stay here,” said Elleanore, angrily, and taking up a small lamp, she lit it at the gas and made an examination of her prison. The door opening into the hall was evidently fastened by some kind of a spring, and the handle resisted all the efforts Elleanore made to turn it. She next looked out of the two windows: far below was the paved yard; the adjacent house on the left was vacant; on the right lived Father Munot. She then entered the bed-room; it had one window next the vacant house, and a door opening to the landing, out of which door Mrs. Duval had gone. None of the windows could be lifted, for Mrs. Duval had seen that all were securely fastened down, but, that there might be perfect ventilation of the rooms, over each door and window was a little iron lattice. Elleanore put down her lamp and paced up and down excitedly. She thought of the anxiety of her friends; she wondered if they would not come to her aunt’s in search of her; she considered whether

it might not be possible for her to seize some fortunate moment when the doors were open and leave the house. "At all events," she said to herself, "if they find that I remain firm, and that nothing they can say can change my belief, they will let me go."

Late in the evening she retired to the inner room: a quiet conscience and a healthful body are apt to bring sound rest, and so deep was Elleanore's slumber that some one had entered the larger apartment, removed the tea equipage, and left in its place, under covers and in a hissing coffee-urn, a most inviting breakfast before she woke.

"I might as well make the best of it," said Elleanore, as she prepared to take her morning meal. "It is surely a very strange and unwarrantable proceeding," she said to herself, "but then the hand of God is in every circumstance of life, and I will wait to see what good he has folded up in these events."

Breakfast over, Elleanore examined her various sources of amusement. She fed the canary

and the macaw, watered the plants, and picked off a few wilted leaves that were upon them; then stopped by the window, looking out in a reverie, when the door opened with a sudden snap, and her aunt stood before her.

"I hope you rested well, Elleanore?" she said.

"Very comfortably, thank you."

"And you relished your breakfast?"

"It was very good."

"I do not wish you to look upon me as your enemy, my dear girl: I am really your most devoted friend."

"I think, aunt," replied Elleanore, "that you had better put an end to this farce, and let me return home."

"Your true home is in the Church, and I am only anxious that you should seek that."

"There has been enough of this, Aunt Harriet," said Elleanore, impatiently. "If I were a child, these words and acts might influence me; but as it is, I am too old and too fixed in my opinions for you ever to bring me to your views."

With a shake of her head, Mrs. Duval put aside the subject, and said, "Here are books, pictures, work and music; make yourself as happy as you can. I trust soon to allow you the liberty of the house. If you will step into the bed-room, I will take out your breakfast-tray."

"I shall not step there at all," replied Elleanore; "I intend to leave this room when you do."

Mrs. Duval took up the tray and carried it into the bed-room, placing it on a table. Elleanore followed her steps; she then returned to the sitting-room, Elleanore still by her side; when, shutting the door between the two apartments, it fastened itself, being furnished with a dead-latch.

"Now, Elleanore," said the lady, "you might as well take your seat, and permit me to leave the room; if you do not, I shall stay until you weary of my company."

Elleanore's first impulse being to show her aunt that she did not desire her society, she walked with considerable stateliness to the win-

dow, and Mrs. Duval at once withdrew. Standing by the window, Elleanore took a resolution perhaps somewhat singular. She resolved to make no violent effort to leave her aunt's dwelling; if plain opportunity offered, she would depart, and she would stay, while stay she did, under strong protest; but she had some curiosity to see "whereunto this thing would grow;" and so unusual were the circumstances in which she found herself, that she was ready to believe that there was for her in that house some special mission.

While Elleanore was musing thus, Mrs. Duval was dressing for a walk. She had been at considerable expense, and at more trouble and anxiety, to get possession of Elleanore. To further her project, she had dismissed her governess, sent Violet to a convent to pursue her studies, and permitted her elder girls to go to New York. She had scrutinized the dispositions and the religious spirit of her servants, that she might dread no defeat from their interference; and Father Munot and a whole Romish sisterhood

stood ready to bring her aid in detaining her prisoner.

Reviewing these favorable points in her scheme, Mrs. Duval tied her bonnet-strings in a magnificent bow, adjusted her veil, pulled every wrinkle out of her coat, and set off to Elleanore's school to ask for her niece! Gaining renewed audacity from the conflicting versions of the story of Elleanore's loss that she heard there, and well satisfied with her measures for concealment, she coolly went to Doctor Grant's to raise loud lamentation over the lost Elleanore, and to press a search for her with great apparent zeal. Verily, the double-tongued Tyrians did not *all* perish with Carthage.

Little dreaming of her aunt's duplicity, and half expecting to hear her guardian's voice claiming her each moment, Elleanore continued the examination of her new quarters. The books were first explored. One after another she took them up and read their titles: "The Christian Manual," "The Catechism of the Council of Trent," a French book, "Roya-

mont's Histories of the Bible," "The Lives of the Saints," a volume of lyrics upon saints' miracles, a collection of legends, and so on for many more. No Bible; no book that did not directly set forth the Church of Rome. Elleanore flung down the last one in disgust, and went to the melodeon. She turned over the music: "Evening Hymn to the Virgin," "Ora pro Nobis," "Novice's Farewell," and so sheet after sheet of words and notes—all of it such music as Mrs. Duval supposed would lead Elleanore's mind in the right path.

"It is a blessing," said Elleanore, "that I can play without notes, and that I remember all my favorite hymns." Still, even while thus speaking, she returned to the "Ora pro Nobis," and placing it before her, sat down to the instrument. It was an old familiar tune her mother had sung to other words, and now instead of

"Hear, mother, hear us,
Star of the deep,"

Elleanore's clear, full voice rose in the words.

"Jesus Christ, crucified,
We lift our souls to thee."

There was quite a satisfaction in perverting her aunt's music from its original intention.

The music did not cease with "Ora pro Nobis." Elleanore sang "Coronation" and "Greenland's icy mountains" with great enthusiasm, and then her fingers wandered off in a musical improvisation, a sort of melodious reverie in which she loved to indulge. She wearied of the melodeon at last, and suddenly rising, went to the corner guarded by the prie-dieu, and lifted up the silken curtain. So unique to her Protestant eyes was the spectacle thus revealed that she fastened the dark blue drapery up by its blue and tinsel cord, and, resting against the chair, scanned the "incentive to devotion," as her aunt had styled it, with much curiosity. There was a small marble-topped table, in the centre of which stood a bowl of engraved glass, holding what Elleanore conjectured was holy water. On either side of this bowl stood a vase of wax flowers of ex-

quisite workmanship; behind the bowl was a statuette in Parian marble of the Virgin and babe, while hanging over this, against a screen of dark green velvet, was a crucifix in ebony and ivory. Elleanore next noticed three bronze brackets holding wax candles, while a wreath of many-hued chrysanthemums was festooned about the table. She glanced down to the chair against which she leaned: it was of black velvet mounted on rosewood, and embroidered with a cross surrounded with a garland of passion flowers.

“A help to devotion! incentive to piety!” cried Elleanore, as she noted all. “I should say, rather a fanciful device of the Adversary of souls, to draw our thoughts from diviner things and fix them on the trifles of earth. This is indeed a pretty and costly playhouse; silk velvet, embroidery, flowers, marble, cut glass—truly a very tasteful arrangement of all; and yet”—and her mind went to dark cellars, where human wretches drag out lonely and miserable lives; to stifling garrets, where weary mothers toil and



Bridget bowed low and crossed herself. Page 165.

children cry for bread; and she pictured the Parian Madonna and the costly crucifix, with all their rich surroundings, converted into gold by which to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. "By these things God might indeed be worshiped."

A tap at the bedroom door aroused Elleanore. "Come in," she said, scorning to move from her examination of the private altar. Bridget entered with a large salver holding Elleanore's dinner. The girl placed her burden on the centre-table, and turning her face to the corner decorations, began crossing herself with much devotion. Elleanore paused a moment, then dropped the curtain, pushed the "prie-dieu" into its place, and turned away.

"Oh, miss, isn't it fine intirely?" cried poor Bridget.

"Too fine, Bridget, as worship of Him who would be served in spirit and in truth."

"Oh, miss!" cried the enthusiastic servant, "it's beautiful as an angel yees are, and as gracious as the Holy Virgin, wid respicts to her!

An' I'd wrck on me hands an' knees to serve yees. If the dinner's not to your liking, or if there's a mortal thing that I *can* do for yees, spake the word!"

Elleanore was about to say, "Then unlock the door and give me my bonnet to go home," but she had a nice sense of honor that shrunk from diverting the girl from her allegiance to her employer; so she said, "I suppose you have been charged by Mrs. Duval to keep these doors fastened?"

"Indeed yes, miss."

"Then do as you are bid," said Elleanore coolly, seating herself by the table.

"Indeed, miss!" cried Bridget, "don't be angered wid me, nor don't go to taking it to heart. Didn't they tell me how yees were in the hands of the heretics that would be destroyin' yer precious soul, and sinking it far below purgatory, where there'd be no help for it, at all, at all? And they are bringin' ye here to the good books and the holy altar and all that, to make a good Catholic Christian of ye that shall sit high in heaven.

Cross yersel' wid the holy water; do, miss, an' say the 'Ave,' and may St. Peter and all the saints be wid ye!"

"Poor Bridget! how infatuated you are!" said Elleanore, looking compassionately at the girl.

"It's myself that's poor and ignorant," said Bridget, wiping her eyes diligently with her apron; "but I'm striving hard to pay my church dues, and lay up a bit for masses for me soul when I am dead; and to put by enough to bring over me sister from Ireland; and it's hard work for me. But I'd do all and double to see yees come out of the heretics, miss! Ye spake many a kind word to me when me heart was heavy."

"Bridget," said Elleanore, "did you never think it strange that when your own Church folks passed you coldly by, a *Protestant* became your friend? Does it not speak well for Protestantism?"

"Och, miss," said Bridget, "hearts is not all alike. Some is cold by natur', and yours is soft and warm. I never lair it to their religion that

made the difference—only to the way they were made.”

“But the Bible tells us, Bridget, that religion ought to soften hard hearts, and change stony hearts to flesh and bad hearts to good ones.”

“Oh, miss!” cried Bridget, with a look of horror, “don’t be naming the *Bible*; it is only for priests and bishops that are learned; Satan uses it to beguile common folks.” And with a profound courtesy and a final wipe of her eyes, Bridget left the room.

“‘Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever,’” said Elleanore to herself; then bent her head to ask a blessing on her solitary meal.

A prisoner thus in her aunt’s house, Elleanore was led to think of that other prisoner—the prisoner of sickness and old age—her grandmother. How much might Elleanore do to cheer the old lady’s declining days and brighten to her the prospect of death! Perhaps this was her mission in this house. On the third day of her stay at

her aunt's, Elleanore therefore requested to see her grandmother.

"I shall be pleased to gratify you in any way, Elleanore," replied her aunt; with the utmost smoothness, "but I feel that your highest good will be subserved by your remaining in this house under the present good influences that surround you. If you will give me your word that you will not, while out of this room, make any attempts to depart from this house, you will be at liberty to cheer your grandmother's loneliness as frequently as you see fit."

"Very well," replied Elleanore; "I give you my word that while out of this room to visit my grandmother I will make no attempts to escape."

"I know I can trust your word," said Mrs. Duval.

"Certainly you may have less hesitation on that point," said Elleanore, "than if I had been brought up in that Church that proclaims no faith with unbelievers."

"I see," said Mrs. Duval, "that you are not

amusing yourself with the basket of embroidery I have provided for you."

"No," replied Elleanore. "I examined it, and found it contained an altar-cloth begun in silver and gold, and a prie-dieu cover like a rainbow, and I considered it work unfit for Protestant hands."

Mrs. Duval bit her lip. "But the books, I think, have pleased you."

"I have been studying the catechism," replied Elleanore.

"A most commendable employment," interrupted her aunt.

"But," continued Elleanore, "I fear that it has failed to further your plans, since closer examination only reveals more clearly the departure of the Church of Rome from the simple truth of God's word as I have noted in many places on its margin."

"Perhaps visiting your grandmother, and beholding how a devout Catholic can die, will change your views," said Mrs. Duval.

"I can never see death more tranquilly and

hopefully met than it was by my beloved mother," said Elleanore, earnestly.

Hour after hour did Elleanore spend after this in her grandmother's room, none there but the old lady and herself. To Mrs. Duval the tedium of a sick-room was irksome. To run about among her acquaintances, to shop and go to places of amusement, or to aid this and that sisterhood in getting up a fair or a festival, and earning the reward of having Mrs. Duval's wealth and devotion and liberality sounded far and near, were her chief joys. From these causes it was that while Victoria and Eugenia enjoyed themselves in New York; while Mrs. Duval was a busybody about the city; and while the Grants and the Reyburns mourned for Elleanore and sought for her, Elleanore herself in that upper chamber was permitted to be a young evangelist to her grandmother: age here learned of youth, and the babe in Christ instructed the hoary-headed servant of Rome.

Says a late "Court Chronicle," "The journey between Protestantism and Popery is short and

easy now-a-days." It has been apparently so to so many that Papists take heart, and think, as they did of Elleanore, that it might be made by all. To Elleanore that journey seemed like the "great gulf" fixed between heaven and hell. A short step and easily taken!—a step long as the infinite distance between right and wrong, and lingering in its consequences as eternity! And yet across this gulf called Elleanore to her grandmother to come. Strong in hope and faith, she taught and prayed, and one by one the old fetters of superstition dropped away, and closer and closer clasped the new ties of faith and love and gratitude about our Lord Christ Jesus. The work begun by Virginia Marvin was taken up by her daughter, and the record of that work is written in heaven: its wages, a rescued soul.

When old Mrs. Marvin found that Elleanore was detained in Mrs. Duval's house, a sort of prisoner, she felt grieved and indignant at the wrong, and roused herself to remonstrate with her daughter about it.

"It is wrong to keep her here so, Harriet," she said.

"It is necessary to the safety of her soul," replied Mrs. Duval, decidedly.

"She is a good girl," said Mrs. Marvin; "she is well enough as she is."

"Really, mother, if I did not know that age and sickness had greatly changed you, I would be perfectly astonished at such remarks from so good a Catholic as you are."

"When people have seen all the vanity and disappointment of life, and get old and near to death, they look at things in a different way from what they did when they were young," said the old lady.

"The more need then, when one gets old and feeble, to have a Church to look after their souls, and to cover up all their bad doings, and to make up for all their short-comings, and to pray them into heaven after they are dead and gone. And then, mother, it takes money to support a Church, and a *great deal* of money to support *our* Church; and besides that, one must

recommend themselves and lay up a store of good deeds somehow. And now what better can we, as a family, do than to get Elleanore to turn Catholic, and join a sisterhood, and put her fortune to Church use? It would relieve the Marvins of any farther duty as concerns *money*, and it would get us a good name and much spiritual favor; and having devoted my *niece*, no one would ever mention my devoting one of my *daughters*, which would be impossible, as I have other views for them. And then," she added as an after thought concerning poor Elleanore, "it would be a blessing to the girl herself to take these measures to ensure the salvation of her soul."

Out-talked, the old lady turned wearily on her pillow without reply.

Elleanore quite often met Father Munot in her grandmother's room, and never without his dropping some wily word for Popery. How glad was Elleanore that her mind was as an armory, stored well with polished weapons from the Word of God!

Once or twice Elleanore was sent for to the parlor to "see a friend," and lo! Father Munot was the "friend" who waited for her. She escaped as soon as possible.

Growing exceedingly weary of her captivity, and finding no way of escape, so closely was she guarded, Elleanore decided that, if possible, it was her duty to gain once more the shelter of her guardian's home. She therefore resolved to see if she could not win over to her help Bridget, the affectionate servant who had the care of her rooms.

"Bridget, I know you like me, and I wish you would do me a favor. Help me to get away from here."

"Oh, don't ask me, miss. Don't they tell me you are drawing nigher every day to the true Church and the health of your soul. Don't ask Bridget to lend a hand to ruin you!"

"But, Bridget, I assure you that you need not believe such talk. There is no truth in it. I am no nearer salvation here than elsewhere."

"Oh dear, miss! Sure, don't ye know the

sick hates his medicine, and the child don't take to learning, though it needs it."

"Bridget," said Elleanore, trying a new inducement, "I think that such close confinement to the house is injuring my health."

"Och hone!" cried Bridget, wringing her hands, "wouldn't I be shut up for ye, and welcome? But isn't it better for the body to perish nor the soul? Oh, miss, there isn't a mortal thing that I'd not do to be saved. I'd go through fire and water."

"There is nothing for you to do, nothing at all, Bridget, but just believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," said Elleanore, earnestly.

"Oh never say it, miss," cried Bridget. "If that was all, it would be easy, entirely. I'd believe everything so I could get salvation. But, miss, if that were all, why where'd be the use of penance, and confession, and masses, and prayin' souls out of purgatory?"

"There is no need of any of these things," replied Elleanore, firmly. "The Bible tells us

that God has made the way to heaven so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. It is *just* believe and be saved."

"Och, miss, I think I might believe ye," said Bridget. "Shure indeed, atween ignorance and being hurried with work, and short of memory, and forgetting my prayers, and such like, I'm ever afraid of making shipwrack at last."

"What prayers do you say?" said Elleanore, with curiosity.

Bridget repeated several which she said at evening, wherein petitions to the saints and the Virgin were prominent.

"And what are your morning prayers?"

Bridget briskly repeated several more, adding,

"There's some satisfaction in the morning prayers—one's sure of being heard. One good pious morning prayer is worth ten at night."

"And are you not always sure of being heard?" asked Elleanore, gravely.

"Well, no, miss, not always."

"Oh, Bridget," said Elleanore, "God is

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always and in all places ready to hear prayer. And it is only the *früh* that makes the difference in prayers—not their being said morning or evening. Are you happy in your religion, Bridget?”

“Well, no, miss, but if I was holy, like Saint Margaret or Saint Eustacia, I might be.”

“But I am happy in my religion, Bridget, and I do not want to change it. I want to return to my friends.”

“Don’t ask me to lay a sin on me soul, miss, by disobeying me orders and robbing the Church of yeas,” exclaimed Bridget, clasping her hands and looking sadly at Elleanore.

“Go, Bridget; I ask no one to burden their conscience for me. But if you would leave your superstitions and trust alone in Christ, you would find peace.”

Victoria and Eugenia came home at last. They had evidently learned of Elleanore’s presence in the family, for they manifested no surprise at seeing her, and had each brought a present for her. Victoria gave her a little Italian

work by the "Rev Jos. Boezo, S. J.—a Life of Germana Cousin, styled Secular Virgin and Shepherdess of Pilbrac," a prettily bound volume, and tempting to Elleanore, who was an enthusiastic student of Italian. Eugenia brought Elleanore a breviary bound in purple and heavily ornamented with silver.

The day following the return of the young ladies was Sunday. Mrs. Duval went out to early morning service, but her daughters had not risen sufficiently early to accompany her. It was deemed too warm for any of the family to venture out again until vespers, and Elleanore was invited down to the drawing-room, "on the same conditions under which she visited her grandmother." She accordingly went to the room where the family were assembled, and sat down in an easy-chair by one of the back windows. The bells, ringing full and clear over the city, called the worshipers to the house of God. Elleanore pictured her friends, the Reyburns, father, mother, children and servants, going to the sanctuary with serene and thoughtful

faces, lips speaking, if at all, of holy things, exuberant week-day mirth toned down to holy joy, even in the little ones. She thought how, sermon over, would come the quiet lunch, the afternoon spent by the mother in the instruction of the children, the evening at the lecture—the whole day a journey on toward heaven. She looked about at the group surrounding her—a Roman Catholic family in high life keeping their sacred time. Mrs. Duval reclined in a velvet-cushioned rocking-chair; her eyes were half closed, she held a vinaigrette in one hand, and a white feather-fan, which she moved lazily, in the other. Eugenia lay on a sofa reading a novel, while Victoria flitted here and there like a butterfly, now examining the flowers in the bouquets, now running over a few bars of a waltz or song on the piano, then going to the window to view the passers-by, and anon arranging her hair and dancing some new steps before the pier-glass.

“Oh, Elleanore,” cried Victoria, “why don’t you get something to do? It is truly doleful

to see you sitting there with your hands in your lap."

"I wish I *had* something to do," replied Elleanore. "I was brought up to spend my Sabbaths in the worship of God and in religious reading, and I do not enjoy being thus idle."

"As for religious reading," said her aunt, rousing herself, "I do not know what more you can ask than you have. I have furnished you with many books, and with copies of religious newspapers."

"You certainly have furnished me the most remarkable specimens of religious newspapers that it has been my lot to see anywhere," replied Elleanore, with some acerbity. "A paper filled with accounts of Catholic Sunday-school picnics; school exercises held in convents without number; rhymes as wonderful as those in Mother Goose on such edifying subjects as roasted pigeons taking flight when somebody was about to eat them, and so on; and stories that would astonish Baron Munchausen. I see in your paper no accounts of the movements of

God's providence or of the reviving of his work; no warm exhortation or thoughts rich in Christian experience; no curious questions, or facts of history or science well applied, to awaken a spirit of scriptural investigation. This is a Catholic *religious newspaper*."

"Well," said Eugenia, rousing up, "what is religion, any way, and what are religious views and so forth?"

"I'm astonished at such a question from *you*, Eugenia," said her mother.

The door was open, and Bridget was just passing through the hall. "Bridget," said Eugenia, "go up to the library and bring me the largest book you see there. I think I'll take Webster's views on the subject," she added, turning to her mother and cousin. Bridget soon brought in a huge copy of "Webster's Unabridged," and placed it on a little stand near Eugenia. The young lady turned over the leaves and read:

"*Right feelings toward God as rightly apprehended.*" *Any system of faith and worship.*

The rites or services of religion. Religious—setting forth religion. There now, Elleanore, why should you despise mamma's paper if it sets forth what she thinks, or even what she don't think? And, mamma, what difference does it make to you if Elleanore is a Hindoo or a Musselman?"

"Why! Eugenia! it makes a deal of difference," cried her mother. "Every one is bound to belong to the true Church, and they *must* do so to get salvation."

"I can't see the importance of it," said Eugenia. One has to be paid and prayed out of purgatory, even if one's the very best *religieuse* that ever was. And I am sure, mamma, if Elleanore died, you would take your share of her money, or even some of your own, to get her into heaven."

"Eugenia, I'm *shocked* at you!" cried Mrs. Duval, fanning herself violently. "Don't you *know* that if one lies a heretic, they sink below purgatory, and are lost beyond any chance of redemption?"

"There, Elleanore," said Eugenia, turning with a scornful smile to her cousin, "you see where mamma's Christian charity binds her to consign you and millions of other Protestants. You are to be roasted alive, and burnt up, and bitten by scorpions, and I don't know what all. I dare say that delightful old institution, the Inquisition, is to be eclipsed on your account. But, never mind; you can comfort yourself with the thought that plenty of good Catholics must share your lot on account of not being paid out of purgatory properly."

"Eugenia, you know better than this, and I must desire you to be silent on this subject. You must find some other theme than the Holy Church to be witty about," said Mrs. Duval, angrily.

"Oh, let the Church alone. I believe this day is never going to end!" exclaimed Victoria. "Elleanore, why don't you know how to play cards? We used to have lovely games of whist on Sundays, when our governess was here."

"I do not consider card-playing a proper way

of amusing oneself on Sundays," said Elleanore.
"I prefer to read."

"Why don't you read the book I brought you?
I did, and I thought it real funny."

"Yes, Elleanore," said Mrs. Duval, "I advise
you to read the life of the blessed Germana. It
may lead you to emulate her meekness and gen-
tleness."

"I did look into it, and I see it ascribes to
Germana nearly all the classes of miracles per-
formed by Christ—healing the sick, deaf, blind,
dumb, lame and palsied; even the miraculous
multiplication of loaves—a miracle which I be-
lieve only to have been three times performed,
twice by Christ and once by Elisha, as we read
in the Bible."

"Dear me!" said Victoria, "I thought that
about the loaves very nice; does the Bible tell of
such things?"

"Yes, and far more beautifully," said Elleanore. "It tells of oil and meal wonderfully
increased of the dead brought to life, of
water made wine, of the sea trodden as dry

land by our Lord, and of the storms rushed by his word."

"Indeed!" said Victoria, "why it must be as good as a fairy tale. I'm going to read it."

"There is none in the house," said her mother, as Victoria started for the library.

"Pshaw, why not?" said Victoria, weary and fretful. "Well, I'll buy one."

"To read the life of the blessed Germana was certainly very commendable, Victoria," said Mrs. Duval. "But I beg you will not believe all your cousin is pleased to say about the Bible. Such parts of it as are fittest for you to read you will find in your missal."

"You differ from St. Luke, aunt," said Ellea-nore: "*he* tells us in the Acts of the Apostles that the Bereans were more honorable than the Jews of Thessalonica, *because* 'they searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.' Your precepts also do not accord with those of Christ, who says, 'Search the Scriptures;' and David cries, 'I esteem *all* thy precepts concerning *all* things to be right;' and Timothy asserts, 'All

Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.’”

“These words may be true for exceptional cases,” said Mrs. Duval, forced by the presence of her daughters to reply—“as for popes and bishops, or priests, for instance—but the Church denies the utility of the Bible to common people, and the Church is infallible; therefore we must abide by her word.”

“David says,” continued Elleanore, “‘I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation.’”

“Mother, and Father Munot, and all those argue,” cried the irrepressible Eugenia, “that the Church is infallible and we must shut our eyes, ears and mouths and obey her. The Pope also is infallible, and we must fall down and kiss his toe. I don’t like it. Why cannot I use my own judgment? Why must my mind be for ever in leading-strings? Why cannot I have an opinion as well as his holiness?”

Mrs. Duval did not reply: she had lapsed, half

smiling, into a reverie. She considered Eugenia very brilliant, and she was thinking how she would shine in society after she was regularly introduced the succeeding winter. Eugenia must certainly shine—she must be a star. Well, perhaps she would; we have heard of the righteous who shine as stars for ever and for ever; but Eugenia was not much like them now.

The parlor had grown unendurable to Elleanore, and she went up stairs. Mrs. Duval also went up stairs to her mother's room, where she thus complained to her mother: "I do not know what to do with Elleanore, she is so obstinate, such a stiff heretic! I am afraid she will pervert the girls."

"You'd better let her go home. Make up with her, and let her go where she wants to be. I don't know how I'd get along without her; but it is only justice to her to let her go. You have no right to make a prisoner of her, Harriet."

"Dear me, mother," said the vexed Mrs. Duval, "how different you are from what you were!"

"I hope so," said the old lady. "I trust th

"Lord has enlightened my mind." The lunch-bell called Mrs. Duval away, but her mother's words rang in her ears. What did they mean? Had Elleanore perverted her grandmother's ancient belief? Had the old nurseling of Rome left the maternal mill to feed upon the Bread of Life? Pondering over all, Mrs. Duval laid her wary plans.

At the proper time she requested her daughters to accompany her to vespers, and directed Elleanore to remain with her grandmother.

Then, when with her daughters Mrs. Duval had proceeded a few rods from the house, she complained of headache, and returned to the house. She entered quietly, went on tip-toe to her mother's door, and, dropping off her bonnet, stood, bent forward, listening. She heard Elleanore, repeating, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Then, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies." Still she listened. There was a change in the sounds—she heard the voice of prayer. She turned the latch and

the door fell open. By her grandmother's bed Elleanore was bowed down in prayer; the old lady, with clasped hands and closed eyes, was joining in the young girl's supplications. Each must have heard Mrs. Duval's entrance, but each continued in prayer. Elleanore prayed for divine light to be shed on her grandmother's soul and her own: she prayed for the strengthening of this new-born faith, that she might live and die trusting to none but Jesus. The prayer ended, Elleanore rose from her knees.

"Elleanore," said Mrs. Duval, in a voice tremulous with passion, "go to your room. Will you bring your vile heresies and your horrible blasphemies into *my* house?"

"Good-bye, grandmother," said Elleanore, taking the old lady's quivering hands in hers, and bending down to kiss her. "Good-bye; I may never see you again. Hold fast what you have got. Hold fast to Jesus, and he will keep a firm hold on you. Don't give him up."

"God bless you, Elleanore! you have taught me how to die," said the old lady, sobbing.

"Good-bye, child; I'll watch for you in heaven."

Elleanore with a firm step passed her aunt and went down stairs. Her aunt followed her closely and fastened her in her bed-room, and then returned to her old mother.

"Mother," she demanded, "what has this girl been doing?"

"Thank God," said old Mrs. Marvin, "I'll be ashamed of Christ no more! She has showed me that I am to be saved by him alone."

"Have you turned heretic?" cried Mrs. Duval.

"Whatever name you give it, I have learned to trust in neither saint nor Virgin, but in the only-begotten Son of God."

"Why did I ever bring her here?" cried Mrs. Duval.

"You had no right to do so," said her mother.

"I'll have her here no longer!"

"That is right; send her home," said the old lady.

"Not home, but—" then recollecting herself, Mrs Duval left the room.



CHAPTER VI.

LEFT alone in her room, meditating chiefly how she might escape from thralldom, Elleanore sat until her cousins had returned from vespers and she heard the bell ring for tea. Bridget brought Elleanore's supper and went away. Elleanore sat by the tray, scarcely tasting the biscuit, sponge cake, and sliced oranges that had been provided for her. As she sat thus, Eugenia entered and took a chair near her.

"Elleanore, it must be miserably dull for you here. Why don't you try to get away?" she said.

"I have, but your mother is a vigilant jailor," replied Elleanore. Eugenia bit her lips. "She says," said Elleanore, referring to her aunt,

"that it is all because she feels it a duty and is anxious for my salvation."

"Now, to tell the truth," said Eugenia, "I think all this talk about duty and salvation is affectation. *I* don't believe a word of it. Mamma may possibly have persuaded herself that she cares for your *salvation*, but I think, in real, sober earnest, your *fortune* is what she cares for. Now, Elleanore, we all know you are a girl of your word, and what you promise you will do. I only say this for *your* benefit. I don't like to see you here; I think it is unfair, and I would help you away in a minute, only I long ago made up *my* mind to let religious matters alone. I never go to confession nor to communion, for I think it is all a farce. What Father Munot and mamma and all the rest of them want of you is some money for the Church. Just you *promise* to give them ten thousand dollars for some church or convent when you come into possession of your fortune, and they will let you alone. Ten thousand dollars giver away will not impoverish you: you

can live on fifty thousand, and have it in peace I do not speak for the sake of the Church: I don't believe in *any* Church, but I want peace in the family, and I'd like to see you permitted to enjoy a quiet life on some terms."

"Eugenia," said Elleanore, looking calmly into her cousin's eyes "I could indeed live easily on fifty thousand dollars, and I trust I do not desire to hoard my money selfishly. But I believe that money has been entrusted to me to do good with, and God will hold me responsible for the way in which I apply it. I can never promise *one penny* of that money to that false Church, which I fully believe is opposed to the righteous kingdom of God."

"Very well," said Eugenia; "do as you see fit, though I cannot understand your motives. I wish you to believe just what I tell you of my reasons for suggesting this course. I do not want you to think me such an idiot as to believe all these fables and admire all these mummeries, that were set forth to me in the nursery."

"If you are not the dupe of a false religion,

Eugenia," replied Elleanore, "I rejoice for you. Yet, as you are not enlightened by a true religion, I pity you. My dear cousin, seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

Eugenia smiled: "*You* think mother and her friend are deluded. *I* think you are equally deluded. One of you cries up the Infallible Church—the other what is termed faith. *I* think it is wisest to set both aside," she said.

"You wish me to think you wise, Eugenia; but I can have only a poor opinion of your wisdom if you say that you have no immortal, spiritual nature; and if you admit that you *have* such a nature, you should not despise those spiritual truths that are necessary to its happiness."

"The fact is," replied Eugenia, "that these inner, higher or spiritual things, whichever you may call them, have never come home to me. Life is strong within me and about me; so why should I stop to prepare for and ponder what is to come after life at some distant day? Just think how many long years are between now

and the time when I shall be old and near death, like grandma."

"I don't know that you have any reason to be assured that you will ever be as old as grandma. Many die younger than you are now, and I think your wisest plan would be to get ready to die, and then you will be ready to live as long as the Lord sees fit." Eugenia had risen, and waited with unconcealed impatience the close of her cousin's remarks.

"You and I are very far apart in opinion: I wonder if we shall ever get nearer together," she said lightly, and left the room.

Later, when Elleanore had lit the gas and the house was quiet, when she had heard eight o'clock strike, and was wondering if it were not nearly nine, her aunt Duval entered with Elleanore's hat and coat.

"Here, Elleanore," said the lady, "put on your things. You have abused my confidence and insulted my hospitality: I desire your presence in my house no longer."

"And I have never desired to be here. I

came and stayed against my will," returned Elleanore, receiving the clothing from her aunt's hands. "But where am I to go?"

"To your home."

"And how?"

"A carriage is waiting to take you there."

"I shall not go in it. I will wait until morning, and go home by myself."

"I do not wish to have you here any longer."

"Very well; call Bridget, and let her accompany me, and I will walk over to Dr. Grant's at once. It is early in the evening, and the distance is not great."

"I shall not permit you to go in that way. Put on your things and enter the carriage at once."

"Never," said Elleanore, decidedly, "for I know the carriage will not take me to Dr. Grant's. You brought me here on false pretences, you had prepared this prison for me; and, having brought me here by fraud, you have kept me by force. I cannot trust you."

Mrs. Duval stood looking at her niece in

silence for some minutes, wrath gradually giving place to iron determination. "Elleanore," she demanded, "will you go quietly into that carriage?"

"No," said Elleanore, "I will not. I detest a scene and confusion, but I will not enter that carriage while I have voice or strength left."

"As you choose," said Mrs. Duval; "whatever is the result of your obstinacy, you bring it on yourself."

Mrs. Duval left Elleanore for a few minutes, then she returned hastily. Elleanore sat by the centre-table, her head resting on her hand. Mrs. Duval reached up and turned out the gas. "I shall not leave this light burning for you," she said.

"How queerly aunt acts!" said Elleanore, left alone in the darkness, "and what an odd smell there is in the room!" She reached out her hand and touched moist cambric. "Oh, aunt has left her handkerchief. This is a strange perfume she uses—not unpleasant, but overpowering," and she lifted the handkerchief to her face. "It is

"strange how tired and drowsy I feel," she added, pushing it away.

She slept, or seemed to sleep; the gas was lit again, but did not arouse her; the cloak and hood were put on; the handkerchief, wet with chloroform, was again applied to her face; a carriage at the door received two or three figures and drove off. The next morning Violet Duval was at home again; Bridget was waiting on grandma instead of on Elleanore; the two back rooms that had held the captive for so many weeks were thrown open. Elleanore was gone.

With the morning Elleanore awoke. Her head felt heavy, her eyes were dull, she felt like one half asleep; and indeed could hardly convince herself that she did not dream, so strange was the place where she found herself. The room was smaller even than the bed-room at her aunt's; had one window, the upper half of which was let down, making the air of the apartment fresh and cool. The four whitewashed walls were bare, except for a crucifix suspended over a small pine table. Near the table was a chair; on the table

lay a missal and breviary bound in black cloth; on a few hooks hung the clothes that Elleanore had been wearing at Mrs. Duval's. Opposite the bed was a washstand, with an earthen basin and pitcher; a towel rack stood near, furnished with spotless but coarse towels, and two drawers in the washstand were pulled partly open, revealing the remainder of Elleanore's clothes neatly folded away. "Really," said Elleanore, sitting up in bed, "I am ready to believe that the stories of the 'Arabian Nights' are true, and I am the sport of half a dozen genii. Or rather," she added, "I am truly the sport of a band of Papists who have nearly all the devices of the Evil One at command." She stepped out of bed and went to the window. The window overlooked a large and beautiful garden surrounded by a high wall. Mounds covered with flowers, huge vases full of blooming vines, gravel walks winding here and there, trees, shrubs and flowers, with fountains springing into the fragrant summer air, all furnished a prospect so entrancing to the long-imprisoned Elleanore that she could hardly cease

gazing long enough to dress herself. Having dressed, she again stood by the window, raising the lower sash now, that she might enjoy the breeze from the garden. As she stood there a clanging of bells arose for a few seconds, and the door of her room opened to the entrance of a nun. The sister was a young woman, clad in the coarse black weeds of her order, her slight, bending figure and hollow chest suggesting a feeble constitution; her large black eyes had a peculiar mournfulness, and looked strangely forth from the white muslin folds bound closely over her brow; her features had been beautiful, but were sharpened by illness; her lips were pale, and her complexion colorless as that of a corpse. She came quietly to Elleanore's side. "The garden is very beautiful," she said.

"Very; I have been looking at it ever since I got up," replied Elleanore.

"There is a more lovely sight still that should have occupied your thoughts and eyes, dear child," said the nun, and, turning Elleanore gently about, she pointed to the crucifix.

Elleanore blushed. "In the strangeness of my position this morning, and the tumult of thought these unexpected scenes have excited, I have indeed been lacking in devotion, madam," she replied. "The prayers I should have addressed to my God are yet unsaid; but in those prayers I need the aid of no crucifix."

"We are poor ignorant beings, and know not what we need," replied the nun; "but do not call me *madam*: such titles I laid aside with the world I have left; call me Sister Agnes. But the bell you heard was for devotions; come, we will go to the chapel, and you can there offer up your prayers." She took Elleanore's arm and led her from the room into a long corridor. On either side of this corridor opened rooms like that occupied by Elleanore, and at the one end was a larger apartment, furnished with many beds, from which room came about a dozen girls from five to ten years old, under the charge of two of the "sisters."

As in obedience to the ringing of the chapel bell the inmates of the rooms came forth, the

corridor was soon filled with a motley crowd—girls of all ages and of nearly all stations in life, in light and brightly-colored garments, forming a strange contrast to the narrow black robes and dead-white muslin folds of the members of the order. Two of this number particularly caught Elleanore's eye. The one a tall, finely-formed girl, whose sparkling blue eyes and brilliant complexion, elaborately arranged hair and constant smiles, together with her blue lawn dress, formed a bright relief to the sombre figure of a pale little nun, whose arm she had caressingly clasped, and whose pious meditations she seemed determined to interrupt with her lively sallies.

"Sister Lena," said the nun who accompanied Elleanore, in a rebuking tone, "we are going to our devotions."

"Of course we are, Sister Agnes," said the young girl called Lena, "and you know I dote on devotions of all kinds; but I never *could* keep my face straight nor my tongue still; no hardly even during high mass."

At this remark a little girl of ten, who had

pushed herself in among the elder ones, made so singular a gesture as to claim Elleaume's notice. The little damsel in question was a comical-looking child, with very short black hair, that being determined to curl in spite of the scissors, frizzed tight to her prettily-shaped head. She had small and very black eyes, set closely together, a marvelously clear complexion, a short pug nose, and a small, mobile mouth. She had drawn up her shoulders to her ears and twisted her quizzical face into very much the expression of the bad boy in the illustrated papers, who sees the old gentleman tripping on the orange-peel that has been cast down as a snare for him. The nun beside Lena could not repress a smile, for which she at once looked very penitent.

"You are out of your place, Mignon, and must not make faces," she said.

Mignon dropped her shoulders, and, drawing her countenance into a deprecatory look, slipped back by her young companions. As they entered the chapel door, however, Mignon's whole

aim seemed to be to escape the holy water that was sprinkled over the worshipers from a tin can fastened to the door-post, and diligently rubbing off a single drop that had fallen on her nose, she took her appointed seat.

While the rest of the pupils joined the nuns in the crossings, bowings and in repeating the various prayers, Elleanore quietly retained her seat, her hands folded in her lap—careful, while she did not join in the devotions, to offer no disrespect either by curious gazing or the shadow of a smile. Lena was particularly earnest in observance of all the forms of worship, and Mignon followed all as she had been instructed, but in a queer, hasty, absurd way, bowing like a china mandarin in a tea shop, ducking down and springing up when she should kneel, after the fashion of the monkey in the spring-box in the toy-stores, and crossing herself in such a way, making vicious little pokes at herself with the tip of her tiny finger, as if she were counting tit-tat-toe, for who should wear the handkerchief in a game of blind-man's buff.

The exercises in the chapel over, breakfast came next in order, and the pupils went to a long dining-room, accompanied by Sister Agnes, Martha, the pale nun, who seemed Lena's favorite, and the Mother Superior of the institution. The Mother Superior was a tall woman, of large and almost masculine frame, with a keen eye and resolute face, though some softening lines suggested that, while high-handed measures might be natural to her, experience had rendered her ready first to try mild ways of obtaining her purposes. The fare was good and abundant—the manners of the pupils at the table unexceptionable. After breakfast the pupils returned to their rooms for half an hour.

During this half hour Sister Agnes offered to show Elleanore the building. They visited the school-room, where a rapid glance at the books and apparatus, and the few words of explanation as to the way of teaching from Sister Agnes, convinced Elleanore that in all the branches of a solid, thorough education, the convent school fell far below the average of

Protestant schools. To cover this deficiency, the modern languages, music, drawing and a wonderful variety of fancy work occupied more than an ordinary share of attention. Pianos, melodeons and a richly-toned organ were ready for the pupils, and Sister Agnes was a teacher of unusual ability for instruction upon the latter instrument.

Elleanore had the rare faculty of seizing on the advantages of every situation. Like a bee, she sought the honey of every flower. And here a prisoner, she scarcely knew where, shut out from all she held most dear, deprived of educational advantages which she highly prized, she saw that in music there was an opportunity for her to make rapid advancement, and to this she resolved especially to devote herself. She had been won also by the gentle melancholy of Sister Agnes. The organ-loft was retired, and the light came softly through stained glass windows, while the really pretty chapel lay dimly below; and Elleanore felt that there she should spend the pleasantest hours of her sojourn in her new

abode. While, with Sister Agnes, Elleanore stood near the organ, the bell rang again.

"It is for the hour in the garden," said the nun; "after that will come the school-hour. Come, we will go down and you will meet pleasant companions." They left the chapel and soon entered the garden, where, under the supervision of some of the nuns, the pupils were amusing themselves. Agnes led Elleanore toward Lena. "This is Lena Trowbridge," she said—"a young lady who, from her age and position, seems a very suitable friend for you. I hope you will be happy together. For the present I leave you."

Lena slipped her arm through Elleanore's in an easy, familiar way, exclaiming, "How nice it will be to have some one to explain all these things to! They are new to you, but I know all about them. I have been here nearly two years."

"And do you not get tired of it?"

"Oh no, indeed! Why, when I go home for vacations I am in a hurry to get back."

However, I am going home soon to stay, for mother says it is high time I was out in society, and I suppose I shall like *that* even better than the convent."

"No wonder *you* like it," interrupted a cross-looking girl who stood near. "Such a time as the sisters make over you, petting and flattering! Dear me!" The girl shrugged her shoulders in a way that expressed volumes.

"Never mind, Maggie," said Lena, good-naturedly. "You'll like it better by and by." Maggie turned now into another path, and Lena remarked to Elleanore—

"She doesn't like it here. She says it is dull. The truth is, she was very headstrong, and would not go to school nor obey her mother, and so she was sent here, where she should have less liberty."

"Is she a Catholic?" asked Elleanore.

"Why, yes, of course," replied Lena.

"Are all here Catholics?"

"Certainly—or very soon will be."

"Are *you* a Catholic?"

"Yes, indeed! Here now, let us sit down on this bench, and I will tell you all about it," said Lena, delighted to have a new listener to what she was pleased to consider her own little romance.

"Now, in the first place," began Lena, "my mother is a widow, and myself and little sister are her only children. Mother is a Protestant, but I was not anything until she sent me here, and then I became a Catholic. Mother did not like it at all, and was going to take me right away, but it made me so unhappy that she gave up that idea. However, mother had me promise that I would not join the Catholic Church until I had been at home a year; then I could do as I pleased. I promised mother, but when the year is up, I shall certainly join the Catholic Church, for I am very firm about it. Oh it is such a delightful religion! One feels so settled in it. Protestants are for ever afraid of doing this and that, and are so strict. Now in *this* religion all you have to do is to stick fast to the Church, and the Church will settle everything for you."

"It is strange to me that if your mother is a Protestant, she should send you to a convent for education," said Elleanore.

"Oh, it was very highly recommended to her, and the sisters said they never tried to influence any one's religious views ; nor do they. You can see that. They never advised *me* to be a nun ; in fact, they say it is my *duty* to go home and enter society, and that I can be a good Catholic there. I thought it was very bigoted in mother to oppose me, and just like persecution."

"I should think your early education in a Protestant home would have fixed you in a Protestant faith."

"I tell you," replied Lena, impatiently, "I hadn't any faith. My mother did not think it right to prejudice children's minds, nor warp them to any form. She thought they ought to take their natural bent, and *my* natural bent has proved this way."

Oh, foolish, wicked mother, disgrace to thy so-called Protestantism ! what but evil is the natural bent of the natural heart ? Here must

we stop to tell to many a careless parent the story that cannot be too often repeated—of him who, taking his friend to a neglected patch of stones and unsightly weeds, called it his botanical garden. “A garden!” cried his friend; “I see no garden; what has become of the seeds and roots you planted?” “Oh,” said the philosopher, “I planted none; I did not wish to *prejudice* the ground in favor of flowers. I left it to its natural bent.”

Protestant parents! sow broadcast in the soil of your children’s hearts the precious seeds of divine truth; follow the planting with the work of prayers and tears, and reap a harvest for heaven, a garland for the King of kings.

There was a silence as Elleanore pondered the little history Lena had unfolded.

“Don’t you think it was *wrong* for my mother to try to force my religious feelings?” said Lena.

“I think the wrong was in sending you here in the first place,” replied Elleanore. Just then Mignon ran by.

“Do tell me something about that child: is

she a Protestant? She acts differently from the rest?" said Elleanore.

"No; she is an orphan, and both her parents died Catholics. The trouble with her is, that her aunt dared not turn her out on the streets, and did not want to be bothered with her, and so sent her here for the sisters to make a nun of her; and the child is set against it. She is part French, and very lively, and she had rather die than be a nun; so she acts as she does that they may not think her good enough to be of the order. I don't blame her much; it is a doleful life, but they never urged *me* to it."

"And what do the sisters say about her?"

"Oh, they like her. Everybody does—she is so funny; and they say she will settle down some time, when she is old enough to comprehend that she has no fortune and no friends but the sisters: she will think the order her only refuge."

"Poor child!" said Elleanore.

"Oh, she is happy," said Lena, carelessly.
"See her run after that butterfly. Now those

four girls dressed in dark calico and white aprons are charity girls—poor girls supported by the convent. The sisters are *very* charitable, and they provide for and educate those girls.”

“And are they to be nuns?” asked Elleanore.

“Oh,” said Lena, “that is not settled yet. They must wait and let the Mother Superior and the priests decide that. One don’t know if it is their vocation yet.”

“What is that bell for?” asked Elleanore.

“It is nine o’clock; we must go to the school-room.”

Elleanore had already made up her mind what course she should take about her studies. At the door of the school-room she was met by Sister Agnes, who took her hand and said, “Come to the Mother Superior’s parlor.” So, leaving Lena, they went to a small room on the first floor. The Mother Superior took the young girl’s hand, saying, in a smooth voice, “I am glad to number Miss Elleanore Marvin among our pupils. We have heard of you as a young lady of rare ability.”

"Whatever pleasure you may feel at seeing me," replied Elleanore, bowing, "must certainly be exceeded by my amazement at finding myself here. You must know that I came here quite unconsciously, and without the consent either of myself or of my legal guardians. While I have no fault to find with anything I have seen here, I must beg you to permit me at once to return to my proper home at Doctor Grant's."

"To comply with your request is impossible," replied the "Mother," calmly. "We are but humble members of a holy order, devoted to doing good. We are bound to obey our spiritual directors. You have been committed to our hands by those who desire your good, and our aim shall be to make you happy and truly wise."

"And you refuse to give me liberty to return to my friends?"

"We must indeed refuse such liberty."

"Pray bear in mind that I protested against staying here, and that I was brought here with-

out my knowledge," said Elleanore in a vexed tone.

"We often hear such protestations from minors," replied the Superior, tranquilly, "and of course we can give no heed to them. We will now turn to a better theme—one more reasonable than to dispute about your staying, which is a fixed matter—your best manner of improving your time while in our charge." The slight severity in her tone vanished as she spoke, and she added, blandly, "As you have already, we are told, made good progress in your studies, we consider you capable of judging for yourself what branches you will now pursue."

"I should prefer," said Elleanore, "if I am to be a prisoner here, to devote myself wholly to the modern languages and music."

"Do you care to learn organ music from Sister Agnes?"

"I should like to do so."

"You will study French and Italian?"

"Yes, madam."

"They call me 'Mother' here," mildly suggested the nun.

"That name with me is sacred to the dead," replied Elleanore, firmly.

"To the studies you have mentioned we desire you to add joining our advanced reading class, who are now engaged upon 'The History of the Church.'"

"I do not care about doing so," said Elleanore.

"It is one of our rules."

"Very well; I will yield to it," replied Elleanore.

"To the guidance of Sister Agnes I especially commit you. She is one fitted to be your friend by her natural qualities, her devotion and her knowledge of the fallacies of the Church you now prefer. Our dear pupil, Lena Trowbridge, will also be a fitting associate for you." And then rapidly making the sign of the cross and muttering a blessing, the Superior turned away.

During this interview Sister Agnes had stood with folded hands and eyes cast down, quiet as

if turned to stone; she now took Elleanore's hand and led her toward the school-room.

Part of the morning exercises was the recitation, by the younger pupils, of a lesson in the catechism. During this lesson the other pupils were directed to close their books and be attentive. Poor Mignon blundered most miserably.

"Mignon," said the teacher, "why do you never have your lesson in the catechism? Have you studied it to-day?"

"Not to-day," said Mignon.

"And why not?"

"I was discouraged about it," said Mignon. "I found I had forgotten all I lost my dinner to learn yesterday, and all I said the day before, and indeed all from the very beginning of the book. I did not care to tire myself trying to learn what I was sure to forget."

"But why can you not remember what others can?"

"I do not take to religion," said Mignon, dolefully. "My mind seems full of holes, like the

...ler, and all religion runs out of it; only riddles and fairy tales stay in."

"Riddles and fairy tales are very wicked," said the nun.

"I know it," said Mignon; "that's the reason I like 'em."

The teacher took a prayer book from the desk. "Here Mignon, you must go to the chapel and learn this prayer, as a punishment for your wickedness," she said.

"I do not like to go to the chapel," whimpered Mignon. "I sit there and look at the Holy Virgin until I think she is making faces at me; and the crucifix shook at me the other day."

"It would not be wonderful if the Blessed Lady did frown on so bad a child," said the nun, while all Mignon's small companions looked terrified; "and beware how you despise religion, lest the shaking crucifix should show how the Church shall shake you off to evil angels. Go now, repent, and learn the prayer."

"It won't be any use," said Mignon, defiantly. "I have learned half the prayer book for punish-

ment, and don't know a bit of it now. Religion won't keep in my mind."

"Mignon, you shall have but bread and water for your meals to-day, and shall sit in the chapel while the others have the afternoon garden-hour," said the teacher, and Mignon was led off to the chapel.

Mignon ate dry bread for her dinner with a wry face, but at evening she was absent from the table. Elleanore inquired for her, and learned the day's history.

Contumacious Mignon! She had taken a row of pins into the chapel, and possessing herself of a kneeling cushion, had devoted herself to playing soldier, instead of to penitential meditation; being thus discovered by one of the sisters, she was forthwith conveyed to bed.

A few days after this, as Elleanore walked in the garden, Lena came, and taking her arm, walked beside her. "What a saint Sister Agnes is!" said Lena. "She would always spend the recreation-hours in the chapel at her prayers if the Mother Superior did not insist upon her

having some exercise. Did you know she was once a Protestant?"

"I surmised as much from what I had heard said. It is wonderful to me, Lena, how many Catholics were once Protestants. I see the reason: Protestant parents, with wicked folly, send their children to convents, and those children are made Catholics."

"I do not like you to say 'wicked,'" said Lena, withdrawing her arm in an offended manner: "did I not tell you my mother sent *me* here?"

"Still I say it was wicked and a neglect of duty, which has met punishment by your being made a proselyte," said Elleanore.

"I think that is a very unjust term to use about the sisters. Have I not proved that they *do not* proselytize, by telling you they have advised me not to be a nun, but to go home and enter society?"

"Still, they have made you a Catholic, and after that is done, the mere matter of being a nun or not is of little difference. What did they say

when they found out the promise your mother had exacted?"

"They said," replied Lena—"that is, the father confessor said—that I should not have made the promise, as there was more need of my obeying the Church than my mother. Still, a promise was a promise, and I need not break it; but I must be very diligent in prayer and all the forms of worship, that it might not be made a snare to me."

Elleanore was silent and Lena resumed: "The Mother Superior said that I must expect persecution; the Church had always been persecuted, and that I might receive it as a sign of the truth of the Catholic faith."

Elleanore sat down on a rustic chair beneath a tree, and Lena, finding her in such a silent mood, passed on. Sister Martha came toward Elleanore, and as the young girl saw her approaching, she resolved to ask her a few questions. Martha was a very zealous Papist, had spent her life from the age of five in the convent, and knew of nothing but her own Church. She was of a sim-

ple and communicative disposition, and Elleanore felt that she would hear from her the truth as far as she knew it.

"Sister Martha," she said as the young woman sat down by her, "how did you come to be a nun?"

"I was one of six daughters, and my parents felt that they had not sufficient fortune to establish so many girls handsomely in life, so I was devoted from my birth. I was sent to a convent at five years old, so that I might have no other wishes than to take the veil."

"Do you not think it was unkind that you should thus be selected for a solitary life, without any volition of your own?"

"I remember," said Sister Martha, "that I cried sadly at first for my mother and little sisters, but I got weaned from them, and now I do not care any more for my relatives than for other people."

"Is that right?" asked Elleanore.

"I once began to think it was wrong, but I mentioned it to Father Munot at confession, and

he assured me it was the work of holiness in my heart, such as was to be expected from one separated from the world and dwelling in the bosom of the holy Church. He says among the angels in paradise there are no particular affections, and that monks and priests and nuns approach to their holy state."

"You think then that such a life is the best?"

"I am inclined to believe so. My sisters visit me sometimes. One is a widow; another has lost her children; another has lost her property. One has ill health; the youngest of them is filled with the follies of the world; and the other," added Sister Martha, dropping her voice, "I know little about, for she has become a heretic. The Mother Superior often tells me I ought to be very thankful that *I* was devoted, and set above all these troubles by being in a holy order."

"If such are the advantages of being one of an order," said Elleanore, "why have you not persuaded Lena Trowbridge, who is so zealous a Romanist, to take the veil."

"Oh, it would never have done to urge her so," cried Sister Martha; "with her disposition it would have frightened her from the Church at once. We told her persons like herself ought to go into society, and support the credit of the Church in the world. Besides, you see, if she goes home, she will perhaps make a Catholic of her mother, certainly of her sister; and then it will do the Church more good for her to marry, and bring her husband and children into our Church, than for her to enter the Order with the little property that belongs to her."

"Do you suggest these things of yourself, Sister Martha?" asked Elleanore.

"Oh no," said the nun; "*I* never should have been wise enough to think of them; but I have heard our Mother Superior speak of it a dozen times."

"And what would you advise me to do, if *I* were a Catholic — enter the world or the order?"

"Oh," said Martha, earnestly, "with your fortune and disposition and abilities you were

made not for a mere 'sister,' but for the *head* of an order. You would be a Mother Superior some day, as surely as you joined the order. Your fame would go through the Church. Oh, do you not look forward with impatience to such a position?"

"With my present views I wish I were Mother Superior this very minute," said Elleanore with a fervor that astonished Sister Martha. As she spoke, a vision of nuns and pupils convoked in the chapel to hear a stirring vindication of Protestantism and a revelation of Romish absurdities, and a wide opening of the doors of the convent to free nuns and pupils, rose before Elleanore's excited mind.

These thoughts being all undreamed of by Sister Martha, that worthy nun soon after assured the "Superior" that Elleanore was certainly nearly converted, and would without doubt take the veil.

It was on an afternoon in the following week that Mignon rushed up to Lena and Elleanore in the garden, crying out, "There is to be a

baptism in the chapel. Mrs. Zanier is going to have her little girl baptized; come, all, and see it." Eager for any novelty, the pupils all left the garden for the chapel; and while the arrangements for the ceremony were being made, Lena interpreted the scene to Elleanore:

"That handsome lady is Mrs. Zanier; she is very well off, and was educated in the convent. Her people were Protestants, but she became a Catholic, and her husband isn't anything. He likes this Church as well as any. She had her little boy baptized here, but she has put off about the little girl until now. There the child is; isn't she lovely?"

The child was a little creature of four, with long light ringlets, a fair skin, and elegantly dressed in embroidery and floating ribbons, like a waxen baby in a show window.

"I'm so glad," said Sister Martha, coming up, "that Mrs. Zanier is going to do her duty about little Ida! I was talking to her the other day about the dreadful consequences of leaving the child unbaptized."

"What consequences?" asked Elleanore.

"Why, do you not know that the souls of unbaptized children wail for ever in darkness outside of paradise, and their bodies cannot rest in consecrated ground?"

"No," said Elleanore, "I know no such horrible thing. How shocking to think that neglect of a certain rite destroys their poor little souls!"

"She don't believe in baptismal regeneration," explained Lena to the bewildered nun.

"Don't you?" asked Sister Martha.

"How can I," said Elleanore, "when so many who were baptized in infancy become monsters of crime."

"Why don't they go on and baptize Ida?" asked Lena, impatiently.

"She is a spoiled child and don't want to be baptized," replied Sister Martha. "but Sister Agnes is offering her a paper of candy and a little china doll if she will be good."

The nuns who were about Ida now moved away, and her mother led her up before the priest; the sponsors took their places and the

ceremony began. Ida, mindful of the candy and doll, was quite peaceable for some minutes; but when the morsel of the holy wafer was put in her mouth she flew into a rage, violently spit it out and cried "Candy, candy; I must have candy! That ain't candy! I won't have it. I won't! I won't!" and the baptism was finally finished amid the ill-repressed indignation of the priest and the Mother Superior, the sobs of this "specimen of original sin that had been baptized in church," and the annoyance of the whole sisterhood.

Mrs. Zanier never felt quite certain that Ida had been properly baptized, after all, while the group of pupils on the right of the chancel were all highly amused with the performance. Mignon especially was so delighted that she could not repress a giggle, which reaching the ears of the already sufficiently exasperated Superior, Mignon was condemned to the inevitable bread and water, and to learn again the creed, which she had twenty times learned and forgotten.

Mindful of this punishment, Mignon came to Elleanore the following day in the garden, and sitting down by her and glancing about to see that no one was near, she said, "Do *you* like to stay here?"

"No, I do not," said Elleanore.

"Why did you come? Did your friends send you?"

"My aunt sent me," began Elleanore.

"So did my aunt send me," interrupted Mignon; "how hateful aunts are!"

"She was not my friend. She took me prisoner and brought me here, and I have very dear friends who mourn for me as dead."

"And do you want to get back to them? Do you mean to be a nun?" said Mignon.

"No, never. I want very much to get away from here."

"And so do I, and I would if I had anybody to go to. Oh, I'll never be a nun; I won't, see if I do!"

After this Mignon seemed drawn to Elleanore by a great sympathy. She sought every oppor-

tunity of conversing with her unnoticed. She developed, in these short interviews, a depth of thought and feeling, a fixedness of purpose and a power of design, that amazed Elleanore. Gradually Elleanore had told Mignon all her history. She had described her friends, her mother, her previous life, her hopes, and had unfolded her religious opinions, and reasons for them; all of which revelations Mignon locked in her own heart with jealous care. But this took weeks. By the time that Mignon had learned fully Elleanore's position and feelings, and had come to sympathize in those feelings and to desire intensely Elleanore's release, the summer and half the fall had gone. But there were other events occurring in this time which we cannot thus hastily pass over.

Not very long after the baptism of Mrs. Zanier's little girl, Elleanore, thinking the morning bell late in ringing, concluded to go to the school-room, but found the door of her apartment locked.

After some time, Sister Agnes came and un-

fastened the door, and the bell rang for devotions.

The nuns were all remarkably sad-looking that morning, the Superior seemed uneasy and angry and the children huddled together like a flock of frightened lambs. Only the irrepressible Mignon was in customary spirits, and she evidently did not dare to exhibit what she felt. The breakfast passed by in perfect stillness, and when the garden-hour came the pupils broke up into little groups, generally with a sister in each, apparently discussing some matter of importance.

Lena hastened to Elleanore, and, clasping her waist with her arm, exclaimed—

“Oh, I’m glad its ‘garden-hour.’ I did so want to see you!”

“What is the matter this morning? Is it a fast day, or a saint’s or martyr’s day, or what?” asked Elleanore.

“Oh, I’ve wanted to tell you!” cried the voluble Lena. “Such a fuss about little Minnie Saulsbury! I *do* think the sisters are the most

persecuted creatures in the world. But that is just the way—everybody persecutes the Catholics just because they *are* Catholics, and will not let them draw the breath of life in peace. Now the bare idea of anybody's setting out to insult this sisterhood in such a way! Isn't it shameful?"

"But I do not yet know what you are complaining of," interposed Elleanore.

"I've just got to that now; I've relieved my mind a little. You must know, Elleanore, that little Minnie Saulisbury—"

"Is that the little five-year old, the youngest pupil?"

"Exactly. Now let me go on with my story. She is an only daughter and has three brothers. Her mother is a Catholic and her father is a Protestant. In the marriage settlements it was arranged that all the children should belong to the father's Church, which of course was *very* unjust, for the mother ought surely to direct her daughter's religion."

"As your mother has directed yours," said

Elleanore. Lena turned away, looking angry. "Come, Lena," said Elleanore, "go on with your story." And Lena, who was really very anxious to tell the tale, resumed:

"Well, first came the three boys, and they were all to be Protestants, and then last came Minnie, and her mother wanted *her* for a Catholic."

"But she should have made up her mind about that before Minnie 'came,' when the settlements were drawn up," interposed Elleanore.

"The settlements were looked after by Mrs. Saulisbury's father, and *he* didn't care any more for religion than for the Grand Lama," said Lena. "I'll make another story for you about that."

"Pray do; you are indeed a second Scheherezade," said Elleanore, laughing. "but first go on with this story."

"Well, Mrs. Saulisbury resolved to do all she could for the child, so she had her baptized here. Mr. Saulisbury laughed at that like an ignorant heretic, as he is," added Lena, with considerable

warmth. "Next, when he was off for a time on business, Mrs. Saulisbury sent little Minnie to live with her mother, who is a widow and very devout. However, Mr. Saulisbury found where she was and took her away. That was ten months ago, and three months ago Mrs. Saulisbury brought Minnie here secretly, when her husband was away from home, and he only lately found out where she was. And now what do you think he has done? Why, he has brought the case into court, and taken out a writ of habeas corpus, and is going to send Minnie off into that horrid New England, nobody knows where, for safe-keeping, he says."

"I don't wonder at it," observed Elleanore.

"Sister Martha says she knows Mrs. Saulisbury will die of a broken heart," added Lena.

"Which would be quite romantic," said Elleanore; "but I should think Mr. Saulisbury had cause to die from a broken heart, at finding his foes in his own household."

"You are so stony-hearted, and have no imagination, no fine feelings, and are so Puritan!"

cried Lena, angrily, "that I shall not tell you Mrs. Saulisbury's history."

"Oh do; come, Lena, you promised, and I am very anxious to hear it," said Elleanore, soothingly.

"Are you, really?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Well, I'll tell it. Mrs. Saulisbury's mother was very pious, and had devoted Mrs. Saulisbury, her second daughter, to be a nun, and her father did not object; so she went to a nunnery to be educated, and then took the white veil. She had an elder sister, and to settle up some business matters, the father was going to have this sister marry Mr. Saulisbury, but the sister did not like the plan; so she ran off one day and married somebody else. Her father took this in high dudgeon, and went to the convent and got his second daughter, and carried her home and married her to Mr. Saulisbury, instead of the other one. Only think of that, when she was devoted, and had worn the white veil six weeks! There are very, *very* few go back to

the world after taking the white veil. Was it not romantic? And now, if she dies of a broken heart about Minnie—”

“It will be a delightful story indeed for those who like such things,” said Elleanore.

Lena walked off disgusted, and presently Elleanore heard some little mournful voice in her ear, saying, “I’m glad Minnie’s free, but oh dear, I wish I had somebody to ‘habeas corpus’ me.” She turned: it was Mignon, who was tossing and catching a worsted ball, and, as Sister Martha was now approaching, did not appear to have spoken at all.

The measure of taking Minnie from the convent by power of law had quite a depressing effect on the members of the institution. The sisters evidently felt much aggrieved. Sister Agnes devoted herself to prayer and penance with even more than ordinary fervor. Sister Martha unfolded to Elleanore, the various opinions on the subject that had been uttered by the Superior and confessor; Lena was loudly indignant, Mignon envious, and Elleanore

privately quite cheered and encouraged by the affair.

"I really must do something dreadful," said Mignon, one day in the garden, to Elleanore. "I've been good so long, I'm afraid the sisters will think of making a nun of me right off."

"Oh, they will not even ask you to take the white veil for several years yet," said Elleanore.

"Well, I want to fix it in their minds that I am *never* to take it," said Mignon, setting her shining white teeth, and grinding her little heel into the gravel walk. "I want to get them so they'll no more think of my being a nun than of the greatest heretic that ever lived! Indeed, I'd rather be a *heretic* than a nun! Yes, I'll do something dreadful!"

"Why, to hear you talk," said Elleanore, one would think you were going to turn pirate or burglar or incendiary."

"Why," said Mignon, in a low, cautious voice, "did you never hear what a *dreadful* thing I did once?"

"No," said Elleanore, "I never did."

"Well," said Mignon, "I made a night-cap of white paper, and I curled a ruffle of paper for the border of it, and I made a little pair of paper spectacles, and I put them on the image of Our Lady in our chapel; and it made the pupils all laugh, and the sisters all so *dreadful* angry. I never would have been so wicked if I hadn't been so afraid of being a nun."

"And what was done to you?" asked Elleanore, who could hardly refrain from laughing at the idea of "Our Lady" beautified with Mignon's decorations.

"Oh," said Mignon, a grieved look coming over her merry face, "I was shut up in the dungeon on bread and water, and I was there two days, and I heard fearful noises and saw dreadful things in the dark; and then the next I remember was being in a bed in the infirmary, and Sister Agnes nursing me, so sad and kind, and they had cut all my hair off, and said I had had brain fever. And the confessor told me that I came near dying, and that I would have gone to the bad place, and I told him I

couldn't help it: that wouldn't be worse than being a nun."

"Oh Mignon, Mignon, what a poor, ignorant, misguided child you are!" sighed Elleanore.

"I've made up my mind to do something dreadful again. There is some satisfaction in it, after all."

"And what will you do?" asked Elleanore.

"You'll see," said Mignon.

Elleanore "saw" on the next Sabbath. As they all went into vespers, one of the priests who officiated in the chapel stood near the inner door, by the holy water, with which he sprinkled those who entered, as some, like Elleanore, were wont to neglect it. As Mignon passed him, and he put his hand into the can, she sprang aside, crying out, "*I don't want any of your holy water! If it can't keep that old tin can from rusting, it can't keep me holy!*"

It was as if a bombshell had burst in the vestibule. The horror and astonishment of all followers of the true Church were edifying to witness.

Mignon was conveyed away, and Elleanore saw little of her for some time; the few glimpses she got showed her that Mignon's spirits were yet unsubdued and her energy in no wise abated.

"How shocking poor Mignon is!" said Sister Agnes, as she and Elleanore sat in the blue and crimson twilight of the organ loft, the notes of music that Elleanore had been waking under the direction of her gentle teacher yet throbbing through the carved arches of the chapel. "It really seems as if the strange child had been given over to the Evil One."

"And how does that consist with your theory of baptismal regeneration?" asked Elleanore. "I suppose that her parents were both Catholics, and that she was baptized."

"She had indeed those mercies—parents of the true Church and baptism; but your question is for wiser ones than I am to answer, which they doubtless could satisfactorily."

"Poor Mignon! I hope they will not be very severe with her. Except as a freak of childish defiance and a desire to show she had

her own will, I do not see any particular wrong she was guilty of," said Elleanore.

"Why, she insulted the holy water!" cried Sister Agnes.

"Well, now, Sister Agnes, what is the holy water, or what efficacy is there in sprinkling with it?"

"The holy water is of great importance," said the nun. "That blessed by the Pope and brought from Rome has wrought, I am told, wonderful cures, and greatly benefited those in spiritual distress."

"The use of holy water, Sister Agnes, was never enjoined by Christ or his apostles. It is a rite borrowed from paganism: holy water was by the Latins called '*aqua lustralis*,' and your own *La Corda* acknowledges that you got it from the heathen."

"Well," said Sister Agnes, a little staggered by this view of the case, "if the Church enjoins it, it must be right and good and dangerous to be forgotten, and should be treated with reverence. I don't think anything can be wholly

bad, and perhaps the holy water was the one good thing that our careful Church sifted out of paganism."

"Then if nothing is *wholly* bad, Protestantism must be *partly* good," said Elleanore, smiling.

Sister Agnes shook her head. "I am never going to argue with you again," she said. "I don't know anything about arguing. I never did, but I can believe, and I believe that everything the Church says and does is right."

If Sister Agnes did not *argue* with Elleanore, she yet talked frequently with her, unfolding by degrees the history of her life. A very painful history it was, when we look at it as the history of a weary spirit: seeking rest and finding none—a soul starving and athirst, finding but a stone and a fountain sealed—a heart, whose warm affections, warped away from human loving, and given myths instead of God, was perishing in secret.

Elleanore was one of those to whom, unasked, all give their confidence: she had a large, earnest, loving heart, ready with sweet sympathies;

a quiet strength on which weaker natures could lean; and in the peaceful organ-loft, the noise and the bustle and jarring of life well shut out, and calm and music and a rich soft light about, Sister Agnes was won from the silence of years, and spoke of the past.

"Sister Agnes," said Elleanore one day, "I near you were once a Protestant."

"I was, indeed," replied Agnes.

"And I should very much like to hear what led you to change your religion."

"I sought for peace," said Agnes, sadly.

She stood leaning against the organ, her wan face sharply revealed under the white folds over her brow and her black garb; her hands clasped nervously a crucifix; the heavy lids drooped over her mournful eyes, her white lips trembled as she spoke.

Elleanore sat on the organist's chair, her hands resting on the organ keys, her eyes fixed on the devotee. The appearance and answer of Agnes roused Elleanore to even more than usual energy. She leaned forward, caught the nun's restless



"Sister Agnes, have you found the peace you sought?"

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fingers in a firm, kind clasp, and said, "Sister Agnes, look into your heart and answer me. Sweep over the memory of these years since you made that change, and tell me, have you found the peace you sought?"

"Alas, no!" fell like a funeral chime from the sister's lips.

"Of what avail, then, the change to you? You sought for peace and found it not."

"I hope it has brought me salvation. Being in the bosom of the true Church, I *must* be saved. So the good confessor tells me."

Elleanore remembered Sister Martha and her self-gratulatory remarks concerning her own advances toward angelhood. Then she said—

"Sister Agnes, did you never hear of that great peace God gives his children—of what Paul calls the 'earnest of the Spirit in our hearts?'"

"I am not holy enough for that," said Agnes. "I have wept and prayed and fasted, but the natural evil within me must be very bad and strong, for I do not get peace. And yet," she added, in the fullness of her faith and humility,

"I know it must be I that fail; the Church cannot fail nor come short; on me the blame must rest."

"Sister Agnes," said Elleanore, fervently, "that earnest of the Spirit is born not of our own advances in holiness, but of God's free grace. It is given to us, not that we are full of goodness, but that God sees in us the fullness of Christ in whom we have believed. If you would leave trusting in penances and pious acts, in the good offices of saint or Virgin, and would rest your faith only on Him who died on Calvary, you would find the peace you long have sought."

"Let us go," said Sister Agnes, uneasily, and led the way from the loft. For some days she avoided private conference with Elleanore.

The father confessor and the Superior of the convent had urged Sister Agnes to intimacy with Elleanore, as they trusted the refined, gentle, devout spirit of the nun would do much toward the conversion of Elleanore. Led on thus by the advice of her spiritual guides to a closer intercourse than she had indulged in with

any one for ten long years, life seemed all at once to have a new light, thought a deeper spring; her weary, wounded heart was conscious of the soothing influences of friendship; and while startled by Elleanore's fervid exhortation into a few days of avoidance, she gradually drew near again to her stronger and younger friend. Sister Agnes was one of those clinging, faithful, true woman natures that are no more made for a life of seclusion and heart repression than is the fair, fragile cypress vine to hold itself upright unaided amid sun and storm. In the gloom and chill of the cloister, this life, that might have borne rich and beauteous flower and fruit, faded away, a stunted, bleached and sickly thing, even in its utter loss and desolation revealing what it might have been.

The cravings of her own long-denied nature, and the remembered injunctions of those in power over her, sent Agnes again to Elleanore.

Again they were in the organ-loft: the lesson was ended—the lesson in organ music that Agnes gave. Then came that other sweeter and simpler

lesson in heart theology—the lesson where Elleanore was teacher.

“I thought, Sister Agnes, that I had frightened you away from me entirely; and yet how strange for one to be frightened at hearing about Jesus!”

“Oh,” said Agnes, “you misunderstood me. I love to hear about Jesus. Who would not?”

“I should think *you* would not,” said Elleanore, calmly.

“And why not?” asked Agnes, looking grieved.

“Because you have wronged him so.”

“And how?” asked Sister Agnes, but very meekly.

“You have raised others above that Head that was crowned with thorns for you: you have set others in that matchless place which *He* should occupy as your only mediator with God.”

“Don’t!” said Agnes, who seemed to wince at every word. “Please say no more!”

“I will be silent about Him if you so desire. Let me ask you of other things. Tell me

about your parents and your change of religion." Sister Agnes shook her head.

"Do tell me. Heart-histories are those that do us good. Give me, if you can, a clear, unbiased statement of your changed faith."

"I will tell you," said Agnes, sitting down by Elleanore on one of the singers' seats. "I will tell you all. My parents were professedly Protestants, but not church members. I had two sisters, and they died early; their loss tinged my life with melancholy and the presentiment of early death. We lived in the Southwest, and there there were but few Protestant schools, and nearly all the girls were sent to the convents for education; the boys went to the brotherhood schools. I went to a nunnery, and was a favorite with the superior and the sisters. I could not enjoy the amusements of the other pupils. I seemed ever with the dead. The memory of my sisters haunted me. I felt as if I must soon die, and I was afraid to die. I knew I was sinful: my sins were a burden that crushed my heart. I told my parents my grief,

and they sent for the family physician. He said my nerves were prostrated, gave me tonics, and ordered change of air and amusement. We traveled; we went to theatres, concerts, exhibitions, and the tumult of the great world became daily more unendurable to me. I begged to go home and to school again. At last I got back to the convent, and there I told my sorrow of heart, my fear of death, my terror of judgment to the superior. She called for the confessor. They told me that confession and absolution would free me from all past sins—that the true Church was the open refuge of all weary souls, and insured the salvation of her children. They told me that prayer and penance would purge away the evil of my heart—that if I joined the sisterhood, I should be kept unspotted from the world, the bride of heaven. When all this good was offered me, how could I refuse or delay? I fled to the bosom of the only true Church who, as a tender mother, is careful for her children. If you have ever felt as I did—as if followed closely by some dreadful doom—as if you trod,

heavy with the weight of sin, some thin and slippery surface that any moment might crumble beneath your feet and fling you down into eternal fire—you would fly, as I did, to the only hope that was shown you.”

“And what said your parents to this change?”

“Oh,” said Agnes, “that was a bitter time. It was very hard, cruel to bear. They did not mind at first, but when I told them that I could not go into the world, and had a vocation and must take the veil, they were so angry, so distressed. They argued, they commanded, they entreated: my mother even knelt to me, and my gray-headed father threatened to shut me out from his heart for ever. I do not know how I stood firm. If it had not been for the confessor and the nuns telling me these were all snares for my soul, I should have yielded and gone home to my parents. Oh, Elleanore! in all these years, the memory of those childless old parents who had loved me so, left in their desolate house in their age, has haunted my hours of quiet and filled my nightly dreams,

until times without number I have risen and come here from my pallet to beseech my guardian angels and the Blessed Lady to keep me from going mad ”

Agnes bowed her head on the back of the seat before her, and her whole frame shook with the tempest of her emotions. Elleanore clasped the nun's hands, and bowed her young head beside the black shroud that concealed the sister's fading locks. Presently, gaining strength perhaps from this silent and tender sympathy, Agnes raised herself and went on:

“But I stood firm, thanks be to the Virgin and my patron saint Cecilia. I stood firm, and took the veil. I remember well the day on which my vows were finished and I took the black veil. When all the ceremony was over, on the evening of that day, my poor parents came to take leave of me. I saw them for a moment through the grating. My mother's sobs wrung my heart, but women can weep easily; but when I saw my father turning away his face, the tears streaming down the

cheeks which had so rapidly been furrowed, and over the beard that sorrow for me had whitened, I could endure no more. I fell back insensible."

"And when did you come here?"

"I remained in that first convent five years. Then they said that being so near my parents, though I never saw them, was wearing on my health and distracting my thoughts from spiritual things, so the confessor had me come here. I have been here five years—five long, long years."

"Sister Agnes," said Elleanore, "did you buy 'peace' at this dreadful price you have told me of? Has it come into your heart and brooded like a dove? Do your sins no more oppress you?"

"Alas!" said Agnes, "my sins distress me still. I have *no peace*. I tell my confessor of it, but he says it is a morbid feeling—that salvation is sure, and I must have more faith. I know I am the worst and weakest of the daughters of the Church. I know I have not wrenched away my heart from all earthly loves, and given up my

parents, and taken God for my father and the Church for my mother, as I ought. Sometimes I think there is no peace for any one this side of heaven."

"Sister Agnes, dismiss your doubt: there is indeed a peace that passeth understanding; and let one who has obtained some measure of that peace tell you where it can be found." Sister Agnes did not answer, but hers was a listening silence. Elleanore proceeded.

"It can be found alone in Christ, who said, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'"

"Yes," said Agnes, "in Christ through the Church."

"In him alone," said Elleanore, firmly.

The nun shook her head doubtfully, the troubled look deepening on her face.

"Sister Agnes," said Elleanore, "let me tell you what to do. Do you search out in your books that are permitted you every word about Christ, every fragment from the Bible. Strive to recall all that you read in the Bible in early

years Pray to Christ, meditate on his divinity, on his humanity, on his low abasement for you, on his passion, on his burial, and, more than all, on his glorious resurrection and exaltation. Pray for the Spirit to convince you that in him *all* fullness dwells—that there needs no one to make up to your soul any good, for he can give all, and condescends to be all to you. Doing this, trusting in him, loving him, seeking him, you will surely find him. He says to you, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;’ and he will make good this promise. Will you remember this, Sister Agnes?”

“I can never forget it,” replied Sister Agnes. Then rising abruptly, she went off to her own little cell, leaving Elleanore, led by the glimpse she had obtained of Agnes’ history, to ponder on the broken hearts and invaded homes, the pining spirits held in bondage by the Church of Rome.



CHAPTER VII.

WHILE to careless eyes Sister Agnes and Sister Martha might have seemed nearly alike, actuated by the same feelings and having the same aims, to Elleanore there was between them a wonderful difference. The shallow waters of Sister Martha's vapid life had never been touched even by a breath of that mighty tempest of feeling that stirred Sister Agnes' deeper nature. Angels in heaven might have watched with holy interest the struggles of Agnes' soul, the captive of Babylonian Superstition: Sister Martha, all unconscious of thralldom, with no dream of liberty, was an idiot toying with her chain.

And yet Elleanore often sought conversation with Sister Martha. Like a parrot, this nun re-

peated what she heard, in her babblings unfolding the schemes and reasonings of higher intellects. Pleased by what she thought Elleanore's preference, Martha was ready to talk. Often in the garden-hour these two would sit conversing on some shaded seat; for while the hush and gloom of the organ-loft were fitted to the outpouring of Agnes' earnest thoughts, the light and stir of the garden were a proper complement to Martha's prattle. Martha was a legitimate outgrowth of Roman rule. It is quite unnecessary that the children of the Church should have either hearts or brains. Wire-worked automata, puppets galvanized into motion, the less positive life they have the better. For all real influence on others, for all the betterment of the world she lived in, for all the heaven-aspiring that grew out of sister Martha, she might have been the waxen lady in the milliner's window.

"Sister Martha," said Elleanore one day, "I hear Sister Agnes is from the South-west. Were you ever in that part of the country?"

"I went from New York to a St. Louis convent," replied Sister Martha, "and was there three years instructing in embroidery."

Now in embroidery Sister Martha was supposed to be accomplished beyond all other women. She could execute the most marvelous patterns with numberless sorts of material, and, like the royal Matilda, solaced many an hour with this employment.

"You can doubtless tell me something about that part of the country," said Elleanore.

"I have heard the priests call it the harvest-field of the Church."

"Indeed! and why?"

"On account of the lack of schools very many of the people either learn nothing at all, or send their children to the convents and brotherhoods in the large towns. This practice is constantly bringing up a population inclined toward the true Church."

"I wonder that Protestant parents should send their children to be taught by an opposite Church."

"Oh," said Martha, "they do not care. The Superior says that is one proof that the Protestants are wrong. If they really believed in their own side, they would have their children educated to believe as they do. Now, who ever heard of a *Catholic* sending his child for education to *Protestants*?"

"It is sometimes done," said Elleanore.

"I don't believe it," said Martha, bluntly. "I know Catholics are more true to their faith. It is only Protestants who are so lax, and it is because they don't really believe in Protestantism."

Elleanore was silent. She felt her cheeks burn hotly at a charge she could not deny—the charge of unfaithfulness laid against Protestant parents.

"You have no idea," continued Sister Martha, "how many Protestants turn Catholics, and I have heard Father Munot say this is necessary to the Church. So many of our people scatter over the Western lands where we cannot reach them, and grow forgetful, and slip away from the

Church, that we need many coming in to us from the heretics to keep the Church increasing."

"I have heard," said Elleanore, half to herself, "that when the woman escaped to the wilderness, the earth opened its mouth to receive the floods cast after her."

"I do not understand you," said Sister Martha, bewildered.

"Probably not; but tell me, are the prospects of largely proselyting heretics encouraging?"

"Oh, very. Did you know that the 'Congregation of St. Paul' is composed entirely of converted heretics, and that their Superior was once himself a heretic?"

"I did not know it. These assertions, to be true, should be based on considerable knowledge of the Church and the world."

"I dare say," replied Martha. "I only tell you what I hear, therefore I am sure it is correct."

"You do not then yourself profess to be any authority in anything."

"Oh no, only in embroidery," replied Martha.

"It seems singular to see a wonderful human

body and a reasonable soul reduced to a mere embroidering machine," said Elleanore.

"You are so singular in your remarks that I never half understand you," said Sister Martha. "Just like Sister Agnes: I don't understand her."

One morning Lena was called from the school-room at eleven o'clock: she did not return, nor was she at the dining-table. Mignon said Lena was taking her dinner with some guests in the Superior's parlor. After dinner Elleanore walked out in the garden for a few quiet moments, when Lena came running after her.

"Oh, Elleanore, I am glad to find you," cried Lena. "I am to leave this dear convent, and all these dear, sweet sisters, and go home. It is about the time I was to leave here, and mother has had a chance to send for me by some friends. I am to leave here to-night, but I am going to stay a week in the city, to go to all the nice places and buy any amount of fine things."

"You seem very much delighted. Are the sisters as glad to have you go away?" said Elleanore.

"Oh, they are *so* sorry, it is really charming to see them; and the Superior has been talking to me so delightfully about upholding the Church in the world, and converting my mother and little sister, and being true to the faith, that I'm sure I shall be more devout than ever."

Elleanore could not forbear a smile at the idea of Lena being "devout." They had turned, entered the hall and were near the parlor of the Superior, when that good lady opened the door and invited them into the room.

Giving Elleanore a chair and a blessing, the Superior sat down by her more promising pupil, Lena, and said:

"Lena, daughter, you are going out into the world amid many temptations, from which may the Blessed Virgin and your patron saint shield you! But we are especially distressed that you are going on a long journey, in which you may meet with many perils or even death, and being yet out of the communion of the true Church you would be lost."

"But," said Lena, "I am a Catholic in heart."

"Yes, in heart, doubtless; but that will not avail if the outward act is wanting. If you die as you are, you are lost."

"But what can I do?" cried Lena, anxiously. "You know I'd join the Church in a minute, only I *promised* mamma I'd be out in society a year before I did so. And, after all, Mother, a year is not very long, and I'm not likely to die before then."

"The number of persons killed on boats and rail-cars is really astonishing and terrible," said the Superior, impressively.

"What *can* I do? I *promised*, you know."

"Whether you were right in making that promise, or whether it is binding or not, I—" the Superior caught the keen eye of Elleanore fixed upon her, and finished her sentence—"shall not discuss. But I can tell you how you can keep your promise and save your soul, if you choose."

"Of course," cried Lena, "I'd do anything you will tell me."

"If you are baptized you are safe. Now you need not *join the Church*, but you can be *baptized*, and if you die you will find salvation."

Lena was silent.

"Do you not like this plan?" asked the Superior, gravely.

"Not *very* much," replied Lena.

"And why not?"

"You know," said Lena, "that I feel very proud of having turned Catholic. You have told me it has proved goodness of heart and wisdom, and has shown me above vulgar prejudice; and I had expected to be *publicly* baptized; and if I am baptized this afternoon, it can only be quietly done in the chapel."

"Your reasons have weight and show you not ashamed of the truth," said Father Munot, who had entered and bowed courteously to Elleanore, while the Superior smiled approval on Lena. "But," continued the father, "if you are baptized this afternoon—that we, your loving friends and spiritual parents, may be relieved of all anxiety about your salvation—you can

hereafter make a public and prominent matter of your confirmation by the bishop and receiving the holy communion."

"Still I am disappointed about it," urged Lena.

"Doubtless; but disappointment and mortification of the flesh are the lot of humanity. Prove yourself now a submissive daughter of the Church, and you will, in so doing, set a most laudable example to our dear daughter, Elleanore, who is yet a rebellious child."

"Well," said Lena, "I will be baptized. Will you let Elleanore and Sister Martha come and help me dress? and will you have in the chapel all the pupils and sisters, Mother?" she asked, turning to the Superior.

"Certainly, daughter; such an edifying spectacle, shall not be lost to them," replied the abbess.

"Come, then, Elleanore," cried Lena, gleefully, holding out her hand to her companion—"come and let us get Sister Martha, and go to my room."

Elleanore rose and followed Lena from the parlor. "How glum you look!" cried Lena, "just as if you didn't approve of my being baptized."

"I do not approve of anything of the kind," said Elleanore.

"Come, now, Elleanore, *won't* you be peaceable and help get me up in as good style as the circumstances admit of?" said Lena, pouting.

"Yes, I'll be 'peaceable,'" replied Elleanore, and just then Sister Martha came from the dormitory.

"Come on to my room, Sister Martha; I want you," said Lena, and as the nun obeyed, the thoughtless girl pursued her conversation with Elleanore.

"I think I'll wear my white swiss and a white sash. It will look so innocent and suitable, and you will dress my hair, won't you? You can do it so charmingly." Here they reached her room, where several of the sisters were busy packing the favorite's possessions. The precious "swiss" was just disappearing in the capacious

maw of the trunk, which had already swallowed a dozen dresses.

"Oh stop! I want that!" cried Lena catching one corner of the folded skirt and rescuing it from temporary oblivion; "and, Sister Ann, get out my box of ribbons. I must have my white sash; you wouldn't have anybody baptized looking like a rainbow, would you? Sister Martha, do look up my best slippers and—oh! here's the toilette case. Now, Elleanore, you do my hair," and dexterously jerking out two or three pins, Lena let the luxuriant masses of her wavy hair fall on her shoulders, and sat down on a low seat, while Elleanore proceeded to do the office of tirewoman.

The hair was "done," and the "swiss" dress adorned Lena's plump figure. Sister Martha had put upon the new subject of baptism the best slippers and one or two other vanities, and Lena proceeded to survey herself in a good-sized glass she had purchased for her room, while the patient sisters rearranged the trunk she had just disordered.

"Now, Elleanore," said Lena, when she had examined her dress carefully, "just bring me some white flowers from the garden to dress my hair."

"You look well enough now," replied Elleanore.

"Go now, do!" cried Lena; "you wouldn't have me baptized like an Arapaho or a Comanche, would you? without one bit of preparation."

The sudden recollection of an account she had read of a Jesuit missionary, who had baptized a host of his Indians by wholesale in a time of slaughter, rushed into Elleanore's mind, and coupled with Lena's exclamation, made her laugh. But only for a moment. Baptism was too solemn a thing to be trifled over.

"From my heart I wish you all due preparation, Lena," she said.

"Then go and get the flowers," said Lena, and Elleanore went, disconsolate.

The butterfly was to the ancients an emblem of the soul, and Lena's soul was indeed very like a butterfly.

Returning from the garden with her hands

full of white flowers, herself, in her fairness and freshness, a lovelier flower than all. Elleanore found two little figures on the foot of the staircase that might have formed a painter's study.

Maggie, the cross pupil committed to the convent for safe-keeping, sat on the second step, one foot dropping where it might, the other supported on the step below, and her hands clasped about her knee. She looked angry and disappointed; her really pretty face was drawn into a frown, and her head was half turned toward Mignon who stood near her, as pretty and piquant, with her short curls and dancing eyes, as only Mignon knew how to be.

The news of the baptism had spread among the pupils: all were eager to see it, but Maggie for various literary deficiencies, was sentenced to go at once to bed.

"I want to see it, indeed I do," said Maggie, quickly.

"Pooh!" said Mignon; "baptizing ain't nothing; I'll show you how at the hydrant, when

you come into the garden to-morrow, and that'll be just as good fun.

"No, it won't," sighed Maggie; "one never sees any fun in this pokey old place. I want to go to the chapel."

"I'll go and tell the sisters you've got devout and have a vocation for the chapel and no vocation for the dormitory," said Mignon, merrily.

"Stop, Mignon; you'll get yourself into trouble," said Elleanore, arresting her; "but if Maggie has so set her heart on seeing this baptism, I'll go ask the Superior." So she went to the parlor, leaving the little girls with hope-brightened faces.

"Maggie has been naughty," said Elleanore to the Superior, "but she is very anxious to go to the chapel, instead of being sent to bed. Would you please excuse her?"

"This is the first favor you have ever asked me, and I gladly grant it," replied the stately Superior; "but Maggie must apologize to her teachers."

The apology clause was not an agreeable one

to Maggie. "I can't, I don't know how," she said, ungraciously.

"Come then," said Elleanore, "I'll do it for you;" and, resolved to carry on her good work to the end, took Maggie to the school-room and asked pardon for her in due form.

"You've been gone an age!" cried Lena. "Now, do put the flowers in my hair, quick."

"I was arranging for another witness to your baptism," replied Elleanore, twining the blossoms in Lena's tresses with nimble fingers.

"Oh!" said Lena, mollified; "well, come on now—I'm all ready."

Elleanore had waited upon the elated Lena and helped her to dress in a kind of maze. So full was her mind of conflicting hopes and fears that she could scarcely remonstrate with Lena on the levity with which she made ready for what should be a solemn sacrament.

Lena was free—Lena was going out into the world; she would be at liberty, and following her own pursuits for a time in that very city where were Elleanore's anxious guardians and friends.

One word from Lena, and the good doctor and the lawyer would know where to find their missing ward.

Elleanore's first thought was therefore how to prevail on Lena to be her messenger to bear a word or a line to those who could obtain her release from the convent.

In reality, all Elleanore's anxieties and contrivings for a moment alone, in which to plead her cause with Lena, and win Lena for her helper, were utterly futile. Lena, the nurseling of the convent, the pupil of priests and nuns, would quite as soon put a red-hot coal into the pocket of that beloved best white frock, in which she was now arrayed for baptism, as to take into her keeping any secret communications from that obstinate heretic, Elleanore Marvin. So entirely was Lena under the crafty control of the convent authorities that, had she at one moment been prevailed on to become Elleanore's friend and messenger, the next she would have revealed the whole matter to the Mother Superior. Sister Ann, learned in the human heart, would not

rely entirely upon Lena's docility to Romish tutelages: she kept her eyes closely on the two girls, and would not permit them to have a moment apart. Elleanore grew desperate: her aversion to the convent was well known; she had nothing to gain or lose from the sisters. They were passing from Lena's room to the chapel. Before the door of her own little dormitory, Elleanore paused. "Come in here, Lena; I *must* speak to you alone."

"By no means," said Sister Ann, sternly, "Lena's mind must not be distracted from her baptism."

But Lena did not like Sister Ann, and Elleanore's imploring face touched her heart. "There now, Sister Ann," she said, pettishly, "*she* can't say anything to hurt *me*;" so she stepped with Elleanore into the little room and pushed to the door.

"Lena," said Elleanore, "you know all about how I am here: I am a prisoner, against my will and against the law of the land; carry a message to my friends for me."

"Oh, I couldn't possibly, Elleanore. What would the confessor and all the sisters say?"

"Just one word, Lena—only tell them I am here."

"No, no," said Lena, loftily, imitating the Superior; "you are here for your good, Elleanore. I cannot interfere. I'm ashamed of you, asking me to fly in all their faces just as I'm going to be baptized: what do you take me for?" and she stepped out into the corridor again with a self-complacent look that, taken with Elleanore's expression of bitter disappointment, quite reassured Sister Ann.

Once more, before Lena left the convent, did Elleanore whisper in her ear, "Oh, Lena, say only one word for me;" but Lena obstinately said "No, not one syllable, Elleanore; I hope I know better."

The baptism was over. Lena had left the convent "to uphold the only true Church" in society. It was evening, and Elleanore, leaning on her window, looked out upon the moonlit garden, and thought of the friends "so near and yet so

far." A gentle tap, and Sister Agnes entered the little room.

"I came to say good-night," she said; then looking out upon the garden, "How peaceful it is! I have been in the chapel praying for Lena."

"Sister Agnes," said Elleanore, looking earnestly into the nun's eyes, "tell me, is not baptism an initiatory rite into your Church? Are not those you baptize claimed as your members? Does not baptism fix them as yours?"

"Certainly," replied Agnes.

"Then how does Lena's baptism agree with her solemn and reiterated promises to her mother? And how does this fact of membership agree with what Father Munot and the Superior told that weak, heedless girl—'they only asked her to be baptized, not to join their Church?'"

"Don't ask me," said Agnes; "there are so many things I cannot understand, and yet they must be right?"

"Because done by the infallible Church?"

"Yes, the Church can do no wrong."

"Do you never doubt this dogma, Sister Agnes? Can you believe that a lie told by the Church is thus transmuted into truth?"

Agnes shook her head mournfully. "Your words have the daring and fire of youth," she said.

"Well, Sister Agnes, let my words go. But hold you to the good, true words of Jesus that I have repeated to you?"

"I do," said Agnes; "they are food to my poor soul."

"Sister Agnes," said Elleanore, when they were alone in the organ-loft one day, about a week after Lena's departure, "there are two points about which I especially wish to speak to you. They are now suggested to me particularly by looking into this chapel, which I have so often seen filled with priests and nuns. When I remember that in this country—and in nearly every country on the face of the earth—are numerous 'holy orders,' as you call them, I think how, to make these orders, homes have been desolated, parents robbed of their children, brothers

and sisters separated, and thousands and thousands of peaceful households that might have been, now destroyed by this 'merit of celibacy.' Now to begin with your Pope, claiming to be a successor of Peter: why can he not have a wife, as Peter did, as you know the Bible tells us?"

"In this matter the Pope does not follow the example of what St. Peter did before he was called to the apostleship, but the example of Peter's Lord."

"There may be this point and one or two others in which Christ did not intend to be thus followed. Your popes and priests do not think it needful to terminate their lives by crucifixion as Christ did. Paul says expressly that he *has a right* to have a wife, like Peter and other apostles. I think that by thus decrying marriage, you virtually accuse God of instituting and supporting a wrong."

"Oh, we do not call marriage a sin in itself."

"Why forbid it, then?"

"You remember what St. Paul says: that in this he would that all were as himself; and to

the widows and unmarried, that it is good for them to abide as he does."

"But Paul also says in Hebrews that 'marriage is honorable in *all*.'"

"Does he?" said Agnes; "I didn't know that. But, however, he says that the unmarried care the most for the Church, and also that whilst he who marries does well, they that marry not do better."

"As the old ditty," said Elleanore, smiling archly—

"'She that weddeth keepeth God's letter :

She that weds not doeth better.'

I have no *personal* interest in it, Sister Agnes, I assure you."

"Probably not," replied Sister Agnes, over whose sad face smiles never dawned. "But what was your other point?"

"Purgatory. It is a doctrine I cannot endure."

"It is displeasing to the flesh and to the natural heart that is enmity against God."

"But I think it is *unscriptural*. Now, what is purgatory for, Sister Agnes?"

“For the completion of purification—for the cleansing of the remains of sin by fire.”

“And I call it unscriptural, because the Bible tells us ‘the *blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth* us from *all* sin.’”

“You argue from the Bible, and that is a book I know very little about,” said Agnes, wistfully.

“Your Church is guilty of an enormous crime in depriving you of the Bible, for God’s word about it is, ‘the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.’ Like the holy water, I consider purgatory a relic of paganism. The doctrine of Plato and many others was, that souls after leaving the bodies must undergo purification before entering Elysium. Air, fire and water were the purifying elements, and according to the degree of the evil of the spirit it was cleansed by ‘light winds,’ the ‘mighty sea,’ or ‘burnt in fire.’ Now, dear Sister Agnes, your Church has undoubtedly taken a heathen superstition for the precious and potent blood of Christ.”

"You unsettle me," cried Agnes, nervously. "I think I am doing wrong to talk with you!"

"Think, then, of the blessed Jesus," replied Elleanore, earnestly; "*that cannot be wrong.*"

Sister Martha had attached herself quite closely to Elleanore since Lena's departure, and generally sought her out in the garden hour.

One afternoon she thus sat down by her, saying,

"Elleanore, you are looking pale and thin, I think."

"That cannot be wondered at," replied Elleanore, sadly, "when I pine continually for my dear friends."

"That is a human weakness and folly which will die away in the atmosphere of the convent, and you will rise above it, as I have done," replied Martha, complacently.

"There is a matter I wish to ask you about, Sister Martha," said Elleanore. "One of my cousins told me once that if I solemnly promised to the Catholic Church ten thousand dollars

when I entered into possession of my property, I should be left unmolested to stay where and as I chose."

"I cannot answer you about that," replied the nun.

A day or two after, Martha, having obtained information on that subject from the Superior, said to Elleanore:

"There is no doubt that if you chose to *promise* the sum you mentioned the other day, you could have your liberty. Of course," she added, as a saving clause, "we should feel sure that your heart would soon follow so large a gift."

"But could you trust my simple promise?"

"We think we could."

"Yes," replied Elleanore, spiritedly, "because I am a Protestant and have been taught to honor the truth."

"Will you promise the confessor this sum?" urged Martha.

"No," replied Elleanore; "I am not at liberty to use my property so. I asked the question

merely to ascertain the *motive* of my detention here."

This was a severe remark, and being duly reported to the Superior and Father Munot. Sister Martha and a nun called Sister Ann, a cousin of the Superior, who partook largely of her characteristics, were appointed carefully to sound Elleanore's views on the subject and report them.

On an afternoon in the garden, Sister Martha valiantly led the first assault, according to her instructions.

"I presume, Elleanore, as you have been here so long under holy influences, you are ready to abjure your early errors, and receive instead the pure word of the Church."

"By no means," replied Elleanore, promptly, being determined to bring matters to a head. "I am a Protestant, and as such I *protest* with all my heart against the government and doctrines of your Romish Church, and will never subscribe thereto."

"To what do you object? Against what do

you protest?" asked Sister Ann, sitting down by Martha and Elleanore.

"I protest against Mariolatry—the worship of a woman, when we are told, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and *Him only* shalt thou serve.'"

"And what else?" cried the horrified Martha

"I protest against the praying to saints, or craving their intercession, for we have 'but *one* Mediator between God and man, even Jesus.'"

"Beware, Elleanore, of your heresies. Each word you utter costs you years in purgatory," said Sister Ann, sternly.

"It does not, for there is no such place," replied Elleanore. "I utterly disavow the doctrine of the mass, calling the wafer the 'victim and worshipping it, for there is but 'one sacrifice for sin.' Christ was offered 'once for all.'"

"Can you say any more such dreadful things?" cried Sister Martha, whose first contact this was with outspoken Protestantism.

"Yes," continued Elleanore, "it is a sin and a shame to withhold the wine from the people at

communion, for Jesus said, 'Drink ye *all* of it.'

"Oh, horrible! horrible!" cried both the nuns. Just then Father Munot was seen approaching on the gravel walk, and the nuns reverentially withdrew, leaving Elleanore alone with the priest, the other "sisters" and pupils, as by common consent, avoiding that side of the garden.

"You were holding an earnest conversation with the sisters. I trust it was a proper one," said Father Munot.

"You must yourself judge of that," said Elleanore, coolly. "I was *protesting* against the errors in your *doctrine*, and was about to go on to protest against your *government*."

"Perhaps you will kindly proceed to favor me with those further remarks," said the priest, bitterly.

"With pleasure," said Elleanore, calmly. "I protest against the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope—against the doctrine that asserts of him, as of the king, he can possibly do no

wrong.* When I reflect that in the course of centuries many Popes have been as notorious for monstrous crimes and unbridled profligacy as they have been for their position—when I remember that at one time no less than three quarreled for ‘Peter’s chair,’ proclaimed each himself infallible and the only successor of Peter—I call your doctrine concerning the Pope a shocking falsehood.”

“This is a matter of *doctrine*. I supposed I should be enlightened by you concerning *government*,” said Father Munot, white with rage, yet striving to control himself.

“I will proceed to government. I object to your making Peter the ‘foundation’ and ‘corner-stone of your Church,’ for ‘other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Christ Jesus,’ and ‘Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.’ I object to your doctrine of priestly absolution; ‘forgiveness of

* The question of the seat of infallibility has been disputed by Romanists—the Gallicans holding it to be in a Council; the Ultramontanists declaring the infallibility of the Pope.

sins is with God,' and the 'Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sin.' I object to the union of Church and State, and the temporal power of the Pope; and to finish what I have to say to *you* to-day, Father Munot, I will quote Johnson, who says, 'If the biblical description of Antichrist were put in the "Hue and Cry," there is no sheriff in England but would arrest the Pope.' Doubtless you yourself remember how Paul in First Timothy says, 'In the last days some shall depart from the faith,' holding 'doctrines of devils,' forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats, which surely closely describes your own Church."

"On these points, bold, wicked and heretical girl, formed only for the anathemas of the holy Church—which curses shall sink you to perdition—you shall hear from me again;" and thus speaking, Father Munot strode away.

That night Elleanore's dreams were full of the horrors of the Inquisition; she imagined herself a martyr for the truth she loved, and in her

dreams she nerved herself to endure those countless tortures suffered at the hands of Rome by God's saints of old.

Waking from these fevered dreams, she looked out of her narrow window. As usual at night, her door was locked upon the outside. As a thousand times before, she meditated on plans for escape, but hopelessly. Vigilant guardians, careful jailors, indeed, were the sisters.

Again and again had Elleanore sought for opportunity to fly from thralldom, but ever in vain.

She sighed; the world that had spread before her as a wide harvest-field, where she might work for God; life, with its myriad intertwining duties and pleasures, its loves, its friendships, which had stretched invitingly before her young heart, seemed shut out from her for ever.

A little space—that wall, these heavy doors and narrow windows—kept her away from all in the world that she held dear. She had learned from Lena and Mignon just where she was. Less than half an hour could take her free feet to Mr. Reyburn's door. Ah me! for the bolts and

walls and bars that were between ! She felt that in her impetuous and unflinching words to Father Munot she had provoked the vengeance of Rome, and must now meet it. But while Father Munot was furious, he yet could reason. Several persons, as Mrs. Morgan and her daughter, Bridget, and his own church sexton, knew where Elleanore was. They might betray her hiding-place ; her friends were powerful, and continually searching for her. Elleanore was a person of importance from her position and fortune. She had, besides, the inalienable rights of an American citizen. Ah, he must deal carefully with her.





The Abbess motioned Eleanore to be seated. Page 289.



CHAPTER VIII.

IN the afternoon succeeding that in which Elleanore had spoken so plainly in the garden to Father Munot, she was summoned by Sister Ann to the Superior's parlor. On entering that room, Elleanore found the Mother Superior, Father Munot and the confessor of the convent seated by a table in the centre of the room. Opposite them was a chair, and the abbess motioned Elleanore to be seated there, but she refused to sit down, and standing behind the chair, rested her folded arms upon the back of it, and thus calmly faced the Romish trio.

"Daughter Elleanore," said Father Munot, blandly, his tones a wonderful contrast to his angry and excited speech the day before, "we have called you here out of great love to your

soul. The Roman Catholic Church is the only gate to heaven. It is a *duty* to belong to it. Not to belong to it is a *sin*. We ask you now, as the watchful friends of your soul, will you renounce your heretical errors and come into the only true Church?"

"Not to-day," replied Elleanore, quietly.

"Not to-day! and when, then?"

"Never," replied Elleanore, firmly, "so long as God strengthens me to profess his name and labor in his service in Protestant simplicity."

"We have now for some time," said the confessor, "been trying to reconcile you to the Church and bring you into the true fold. Instead of profiting by our instructions, you have endeavored to spread your infidel doctrines among the inmates of this convent. You spoke very wickedly to Sister Ann the other day about the 'Immaculate Conception.'"

"Yes," replied Elleanore; "I told her it was a recent dogma, and had no scriptural foundation."

"Concerning that you had no right to judge," said the priest.

"The Bible bids me prove all things, and hold fast that which is good," replied Elleanor.

"You have said altogether too much about the Bible," said Father Munot. "The Bible is not for ignorant and unformed minds. Strong meat is not for babes. The Church, as a nourishing mother, provides milk for babes in such books as were fully furnished you at your aunt's."

"The Bible says, 'Timothy knew the *Scriptures* from a *child*,' and David says, 'Unless thy law had been my delight, I had then perished in mine affliction.'"

"I could show you many passages from the 'fathers of the Church,' referring all these matters to the jurisdiction of the Church, and not to the opinion of private persons."

"The Word of God distinctly tells us that if even an angel from heaven preached any other doctrine than that contained in the Bible, we are not to believe it. And I would not believe,

against the Word of God, all the fathers, popes, cardinals or bishops that have lived."

"For such rashness of speech many have been struck dead," said the Superior.

"Yes, struck by the cruel hand of the Inquisition," retorted Elleanore, "which you would gladly bring to this land."

"That is false," said Father Munot; "the Church has never approved the Inquisition."

"Has not your Church but now canonized Arboes, one of the Spanish inquisitors, celebrated for cruelty.* Let history prove if the Inquisition is not your favorite institution."

"As you mention history," said Father Munot, "let history show that your Protestant Church is an assemblage of renegade Catholics. Your Church is of those who grew restive under our paternal restraints—a set of unfilial and banished wretches, who once claimed membership in our blessed household."

"And I heard another voice from heaven,

* The *London Spectator* asserts that of those canonized in 1867, one is Arboes, a Spanish inquisitor.

saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues,'” repeated Elleanore, in a clear voice.

“Do you dare thus to wrest Scripture, and refer to the Holy Catholic Church what evidently was written of paganism?” said Father Munot.

“Whether those words refer to Rome or not, let those who by her have perished in dungeons, those who have been sealed up living in walls, those many martyred souls under the altar, and the millions you hold to-day in spiritual bondage, bear witness!” cried the excited Elleanore.

“It is useless,” exclaimed the priest, “to hold converse with this foolish, ignorant and wicked girl. She is worse than a pagan, and fit only for destruction.”

“Yet a little longer shall she have space for repentance,” said Father Munot. “Elleanore Marvin, trifle no longer. Two weeks shall yet be allowed you for penitence and seeking forgiveness. There are other convents, yes, and other lands, than this. If you rebel and harden

your evil heart, you shall feel the power of our Church nearer its fountain-head. In these two weeks turn from your heresies; be wise if you would not suffer for your folly. And consider how mildly we are dealing with you. After all your heresy, after all your taunts, we yet place you here, in a peaceful home, under tender restraints—keep you only where loving parents, yes, and Protestant parents, are glad to have their children.”

“Yes,” cried the aroused Elleanore, “Protestant parents, recreant to Protestant principles, *do* send their children to you for education, and then are astonished and indignant because those children become Catholics. As if they could suck the wolf’s milk and not imbibe her nature!”

“Leave this presence,” said Father Munot, in a lofty tone. “When I next see you, it shall be to ask but one question. If you cannot then atone for all these evil ways and words, your punishment shall be of your own providing.”

Elleanore quietly turned and left the parlor.

At the end of the long hall the door was open, and the garden, with its flowery shadows, invited her to coolness and quiet. Flushed and breathless, she went out, and as the sisters and pupils were in the lower part of the garden, she stole to a little seat behind a thick clump of syringa bushes. Here, of late, she had had many of those short interviews with Mignon, which had grown more and more confidential. She was not there long before Mignon joined her.

"I saw 'em go in there," whispered Mignon, eagerly, "and send for you. What did they say?"

"They give me only two weeks to change my religion, and if I do not they mean to send me to some foreign country. Oh, Mignon, if I cannot escape now, I shall never see my friends again."

"Will you turn to suit 'em?" asked Mignon.

"No, no! I never can change my religion."

"I don't care for the *religion*," said Mignon, bluntly, "but I wouldn't be a nun for anything."

"What shall I do?" said Elleanore, the tears dropping over her cheeks, as, reacting from high excitement, her fortitude gave way.

"Don't cry," said the affectionate Mignon, much moved. "You shall go home. I'll see you to-morrow;" and she darted away after a butterfly.

The next day Elleanore found her usual text-books removed from her desk in the school-room, and a quantity of Catholic "religious books" in their places. She sat all day at her desk without being allowed to join in any recitations. At noon, Sister Martha said coldly to her, "I can give you no more embroidery lessons; you must fix your mind on other things." In the refectory Elleanore was given a little stand in a corner, to eat by herself, and no one spoke to her. At night, Sister Agnes went to Elleanore's room. Tears were in the gentle nun's eyes. "Elleanore, I can give you no more lessons in music," she said. "And I cannot talk any more with you. They say that you are unfit for us to speak with any longer."

"And do you ask me to change my belief and be a nun?" asked Elleanore.

"Do not ask me," said Agnes; "my poor soul is full of dreadful doubts."

"Sister Agnes," said Elleanore, taking the nun's small white hands in a firm clasp and looking into her face earnestly, "here we part. But do you give up saints and virgins and cling to the Lord Jesus only, and in heaven you shall sit down at his feet for ever, and *there* I will meet you."

Agnes bowed her head; her slight figure shook with strong emotion, her cold, quivering hands fell from Elleanore's clasp, and, with a bitter heart-breaking sigh, the poor nun left the room. Thereafter Sister Agnes came no more to say "good-night" and "good-morning." Sister Ann, stern and cold, unlocked the door at the ringing of the bell and signed Elleanore to go to the chapel with the others. The girls no longer greeted Elleanore as they had done before, but looked curiously at her, and if she came near averted their faces.

According to promise, Mignon found a minute next day to meet Elleanore in the garden. She spoke hastily: "Elleanore, if you were out of here, would you be my friend and remember me?"

"Of course I would, Mignon."

"And would you, if I got out, help me and be good to me? You have plenty of money and can do as you please: would you take me and make a little sister of me? Not a nun sister—I mean a live sister."

"Yes, Mignon, I would," said Elleanore, a ray of hope lighting her heart at the child's earnestness.

"Well, now," said Mignon, changing her tone in her own rapid fashion, "I'm going to get right down, not-speaking mad at you. Elleanore, now do you say to me, 'Mignon, you have a little pug nose, all turned up between your eyes!'"

"Why, Mignon!" cried Elleanore.

"Say it," said Mignon, stamping her foot imperiously.

"You trifle over everything," said Elleancre, dejectedly, and then repeated like a parrot, "Mignon, you have a little pug nose, all turned up between your eyes."

Mignon turned away and dashed off to the other side of the garden, where Sister Ann, after a few minutes' bickering with Sister Martha, was walking by herself.

"Sister Ann," cried Mignon, violently, "I don't like that heretic girl, that Elleanore, and I ain't going to speak to her ever again!"

"What has she done now?" asked Sister Ann, in the tone of one resigned to the recital of enormous crimes.

"She said I trifle over everything, and—and I had a pug nose, all turned up atween my eyes! My nose is as good as hers I guess."

"You see how naughtily people learn to act when they are heretics," said Sister Ann, loftily.

"I shan't meddle with her any nore," said Mignon.

"Do not—she will poison your mind."

"And I won't be a heretic."

"Of course not; *you* will be a *nun*."

"Then we won't let her be one here if I *am*, for I can't abide her," said Mignon, who, behind Sister Ann, had prefaced her remark with a terrible contortion of her little countenance.

"You are a good child, Mignon, to hate heretics," said Sister Ann, approbatively. "Go now to your play, and do not speak to Elleanore." And the crafty little nursling of Rome ran off to her young companions.

Meanwhile, Elleanore, left alone, indulged in a reverie. Suppose she did get free, would she be likely to play chief butler to little Mignon's Joseph? Among her own friends would she forget the little friend of the convent? Yet, even remembering, what could she do for her? There was no way of helping Mignon. Mignon seemed hopelessly bound over to the life she hated. Yes, Mignon was certainly to be a *religieuse*; yet she did not care for "religion," and roundly asserted that "she never would!" Some sodality must swallow up Mignon's individuality, and merge her into a fettered, restive

part of some great order. Perhaps this would be Elleanore's own fate, unless she escaped; and here her mind went back to the first topic, Could Mignon help her out? True, the mouse helped the lion out of the net, but this poor little mouse was itself wound up and fettered in the intricacies of the snare.

"It proves how very hopeless my lot is, when I ponder over what help such a poor little prisoner as Mignon might be to me," said Elleanore, with a sigh.

Several times Elleanore had twisted a bit of written paper setting forth her situation, about a stone, and secretly flung it over the high garden wall, but these efforts to make known her whereabouts had all failed: such scraps generally find their way into the chiffonier's bag, and are turned over unheeded to some paper-mill; and even trying this means of communication with the outer world was a hard matter at the convent. Seated at her lonely corner-table, the next day after her conversation with Mignon, Elleanore, won by the subtle magnetism of eyes fixed

earnestly on her, looked toward the pupil's table, and caught Mignon's gaze; this incomprehensible child at once put the palm of her hand to her nose and turned that unoffending member entirely up out of its legitimate position, glaring viciously at her late friend. Elleanore saw Sister Ann looking on well pleased at the performance, and blushed crimson as she turned away. She thought Mignon very singular, and could eat no more dinner; Mignon, however, finished her meal with fine relish.

Going to chapel the next morning, Mignon elbowed her way rudely past Elleanore, treading on her foot without apology, and at the chapel-door unexpectedly turned and flung a handful of holy water exactly in Elleanore's face; then darting away from the urn, jerked the handkerchief Elleanore had taken from her pocket out of her hand, and marched up the aisle with an air of mock humility.

"Even Mignon has turned against me," said Elleanore sadly, to herself.

The school-room did not furnish an asylum

from Mignon's persecutions. Going from her recitation in the catechism, this mischievous little girl coolly knocked a full inkstand into Elleanore's lap, which exploit, instead of gaining a reproof for Mignon from Sister Ann, who was then in charge of the school, brought a reprimand for Elleanore, and an order to get a basin of water and a cloth and repair the damages.

"Look out," said Mignon, "or she'll get the chapel holy water for it, she's such a heretic," whereat the other pupils all laughed, and Elleanore looked reproachfully at Mignon, who at once rubbed up her own nose in an unparalleled manner.

Completely miserable by being so beset with foes, Elleanore determined to make an effort to regain Mignon's friendship, and so went up to her in the garden and said,

"Mignon, why do you treat me so?"

"It's all owing to my pug nose," replied Mignon, scowling and planting herself beside Sister Ann.

"What have I ever done to make you so unkind, Mignon?" urged Elleanore.

"You're a heretic, and no good girl should speak to you," cried Mignon.

"That is an excellent answer. I hope Elleanore will learn the folly of heresy," said Sister Ann.

Elleanore went off to her favorite sheltered seat, where presently Mignon pounced upon her, saying, savagely, "Don't spoil all by your talk. What if I do act queerly?" and darted away again.

A light broke in upon Elleanore's mind, "How stupid I am!" she said to herself. "Mignon has some plan in her head; I will watch her closely."

Others watched Mignon closely, astonished at the change in her demeanor. She had been the cause and centre of a constant little bustle and trouble in the convent, but now matters moved more peaceably. In chapel, Mignon was quiet and tolerably attentive; in school, she sat contentedly at her desk, learned her catechism

and other tasks, and suddenly found herself able to remember the creed. Under the long homilies of the Superior and Sister Ann, Mignon maintained a decent composure, and, to Sister Martha's vast relief, not more than half the embroidery Mignon worked one day had to be picked out the next.

Joyous as ever in the garden-hour, though with a new dislike to companions, and a way of jumping rope and tossing ball in nooks and corners and close by the wall, Mignon, skipping about one day, stood at last in a back gateway to the convent premises which was seldom used. It was a strong gate, curtained with spiders' webs, set in an arch, and well hidden by an ancient snowball bush which had attained the proportions of a tree. Mignon pushed out, with a small twig, the dust and leaves that filled the keyhole, blew through it, put one eye to it and tried to look through it to the outer world. "Dear me!" she said, "how I wish I could look over that wall!" Then she removed some stones and a stick or two that lay before the gate, and

saying, with a sigh, "Well, no matter!" she danced off to the other side of the garden. Next day she was at the gateway again, and scraped in the cracks about the gate with the end of a stick. Suddenly she stopped this employment and went away. The succeeding hour of recreation, Mignon got up a grand game of hide-and-seek, and hid so securely that after fifteen minutes' hunt her companions "gave her up" and shouted to her to show herself. She had been hiding in the old gateway, scraping about it with a portion of iron barrel-hoop, which she had carried there hidden under her apron.

"Mignon," said one of her little companions, "what has got into you? You are so much better than you used to be."

"I ought to be," replied Mignon, solemnly, "I've had a vision."

"A vision!" cried the others, gathering around. "Tell us about it, Mignon!"

"Oh," said Mignon, dolorously, "I saw Our Lady, and she said to me that if I was not a

good child I'd be carried off, away out through a dark gate to a great big noisy place. And she told me who would make me good, too."

"Who was it?" cried the children.

"I'm not going to tell any of you!" said Mignon.

"I hear," said Sister Ann to Mignon, shortly after this, "that you have had a vision." Now Sister Ann was too wise herself to believe in visions, but she supposed the exhortations and threats that had been at various times uttered to Mignon had caused the child to dream something that had impressed her young imagination.

"Yes," said Mignon, in reply to Sister Ann, "I have."

"I hope it will make you better," said Sister Ann.

"It ought to," replied Mignon, "it scared me so."

"And who is it that can teach you to be good?" asked Sister Ann, who had heard of the "vision" from the children.

"Sister Mary can, because she's Our Lady's namesake," returned Mignon.

"Sister Mary is a good old woman, and can very likely tell you how to be much better than you are," replied Sister Ann, but coolly, for nuns are envious creatures, though what was to be envied Sister Mary it would be hard to tell: she was the convent portress—old, rheumatic and half blind.

"I didn't know that I could talk to her, because she isn't a teacher, and you mightn't like it, Sister Ann," said Mignon.

"Talk to her as much as you like," said Sister Ann, mollified.

It was not long before Sister Mary heard of Mignon's "vision," and was thereby highly flattered. She was ready to meet Mignon's advances half way and when, the next evening, Mignon, by permission of Sister Ann, went to Sister Mary's cell, she met a very cordial reception.

"Can you tell me how to be good, Sister Mary?" asked this juvenile disciple.

"Well," replied Sister Mary, complacently, "I've been religious this forty years, and I ought to know; but how did Our Lady look to you, Mignon?" continued the simple old creature, whose originally weak mind had been reduced almost to idiocy by convent life.

"Oh," said Mignon, readily, "she looked bright and smiling."

"What, was she pleased with you?" asked Mary.

"Oh," said Mignon, correcting herself, "well, she looked beautiful, I mean, and she had a bunch of keys, Sister Mary, just like yours."

"Why, child," said Sister Mary, incredulously, "it's Saint Peter that carries the *keys*."

"Maybe she borrowed them of him to scare me," asserted Mignon, stoutly; "but I'm sure her keys are just like yours, big and rusty, and bright and little, and *all* kinds: let me see, Sister Mary."

Sister Mary reached over her bunch of keys, held together by a double ring. Mignon looked at each one closely.

"Did she speak of me, child?" urged Mary, sharply

"Oh yes: she said you were a good old—daughter of the Church, and would—get to heaven: you would have a vision too some day."

"What are you stopping for? why did not I have my vision *first*? why did you have one?" pressed Sister Mary's questions, disturbing Mignon's reflections on the keys.

"Oh," said Mignon, hastily recalled to pacifying Sister Mary, "I had a vision because you are to gain rewards by making me good, and I'm to get *very* good when I grow up." Meanwhile in Mignon's mind ran such thoughts as these, "Yes, the keyhole's big and is not used, and here's this big rusty key: it *must* be the one, but how'll I *ever* get it off? Then she said. "Sister Mary, why don't you keep your keys all brightened up, and so that one can use 'em?"

"Some of them we never use, so there's no need of taking care of them; and those we use don't need it—they keep themselves in order."

"Wouldn't it be a good work to polish them?"



Mignon and Sister Mary.

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"I don't know," said Sister Mary, shortly.

"For me?" said Mignon.

"Well, yes, perhaps so," replied the portress

"Why, these must be *pious* keys, as they belong here, and so it'll be *pious* in me to do 'em up. And, Sister Mary, if you'll get the end of a brick I'll stand here and rub them, and you can tell me all about the saints. Only don't say anything about it—that you're to teach me, you know, Sister Mary."

Now, Sister Mary's especial hobby was telling legends, and to gratify this passion by getting so good a listener as Mignon, and to pamper her self-love by taking thus privately the place of the teaching sisters, old Mary got the requisite brick, and for two play-hours on two successive days Mignon rubbed keys. Aided by the entrance of one of the sisters, she slipped the key she wanted just where she could get it off by an easy pull. There she let the matter rest a while, and seeing Elleanore in the garden, found a chance to say, 'Keep your ears open and be ready to run, and do just as I tell you.' Again she said,

"Keep your eye on the arch-gate," and Elleanore went to and from that gate and found the shortest and most hidden way to it behind the great snow-ball bush.

While these things were going on, half the Autumn had fled away, and Elleanore's friends searched for her still, though hopelessly, and mourned very deeply for her, her name growing sacred and to be spoken softly, as of one dead.

Thus feeling about Elleanore, Mrs. Reyburn was sitting one afternoon by her open window, and Edna stood beside her. A young woman passed along the street, looking earnestly at the house.

"Mother," said Edna, "there's that girl that Elleanore used to write letters for—Bridget, who lived at Mrs. Duval's, you know."

Moved by one of those strong, sudden impulses which sway us sometimes, we cannot tell why, Mrs. Reyburn looked from the parlor-window and said, "Bridget!"

Bridget stopped, hesitated, held down her head, and was about to go on.

"Stop, Bridget, one moment; I want to see you. Go bring her in, Edna," said Mrs. Reyburn.

Edna ran out on the porch and brought in the half-reluctant Bridget.

"Bridget," said Mrs. Reyburn, "you remember Miss Elleanore Marvin?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Bridget, in a smothered tone.

"She has been lost since last spring, and we are very much distressed about her."

"Yes, ma'am."

"And her aunt is very much distressed also."

"Yes, ma'am."

"I just thought, as you went by, that I would ask you if you knew—you knew she was gone?"

"Yes, ma'am," from Bridget, still.

"She was very kind to you, Bridget?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And you would be sorry to have her injured or unhappy? Do you know where she is, Bridget?"

"No, ma'am?"

"Can you not tell me *anything* about her?" urged Mrs. Reyburn, thinking there was something strange in the girl's manner.

Bridget was standing near the door, and now, like Hezekiah of old, she "turned her face to the wall and wept." Mrs. Reyburn, convinced that here was a clue to the labyrinth of mysterious circumstances which hid Elleanore, sprang up, and grasping the girl's wrist, looked sternly in her distressed face. With all the ardor of her temperament, Grace Reyburn was about to demand explanation and threaten a legal process to extort one; but her good sense came to the rescue, and leading Bridget to the corner of the sofa, she placed her there, and seating herself on a chair before her, bade the astonished Edna leave the room.

"Bridget," said Mrs. Reyburn, "I see you know something of Miss Elleanore."

"Och, it's a burden on me mind, she is; and I've a message left by the ould lady in the silent midnight before she died, an' I've not given it an' me heart is breakin'."

"Bridget, did you know anything of Miss Elleanore after she left us?"

"Left yees or her aunt, is it?"

"After she left Mrs. Grant."

"Well, then—but, howly Mother! if I tell ye, and me priest and me misthress an' all me friends turn again me, oh who'll take compassion on poor Bridget."

"I will," replied Mrs. Reyburn; "I will be your true friend if you tell me the *whole truth*."

"But who'll open their doors to befriend a poor girl without a character, turned adrift in the wide world?"

"I will, Bridget."

"An' who'll save me soul whin the curse of the priest is lyin' heavy on it?"

"There is One, Bridget, who will take pity on your soul, who is above the priest: I will teach you of him. Speak, girl—speak the truth at once."

"Well then, ma'am, I'll tell as far as I can. When yees lost her, she was at her aunt's all the time."

"At Mrs. Duval's?" cried Mrs. Reyburn, indignantly; "what a Jesuit the woman is!"

"Sure she is that," said the simple Bridget, "and it's the only good thing about her. But I don't see as it makes her any better. Well, ma'am, she kept Miss Elleanore there, and treated her as became a lady, only she was held fast prisoner, and I waited on her."

"Oh, Bridget, was that your return for all her gentleness to you, to be her jailer?" exclaimed Mrs. Reyburn, reproachfully.

"Well, ma'am," replied the girl, weeping, "I had many a heartache and wakeful night over it; but didn't they tell me she was a heretic, and was destroying her precious soul, and would have never even a chance of purgatory an' she didn't turn?"

"Go on, go on, and tell me where she is!" said Mrs. Reyburn.

"Miss Elleanore had leave to be with the ould lady, ma'am, under promise of not thrying to get away, and the weeks grew long and I was 'ongin' to let her out; for with all her heresy,

she was nighest a saint and angel of any of them. But all at onct, ma'am, on a Sunday afternoon it was, there was a grand fuss, and Mrs. Duval sent for Father Munot, and they said she had been convertin' the ould lady out of the true Church; and then, ma'am, that night they brought a carriage, and I did up her clothes, and they dressed her in a large bonnet and a long cloak, and they took her off, ma'am, to some convent, and which, ma'am, I can't tell yees, for they are very secret about it all."

"But why did she go? Why did she not resist, and call the police and rouse the neighborhood?"

"For that, ma'am, all the while she stayed at Mrs. Duval's she kept sure from day to day they'd let her go, and she was intent on the ould lady, for she nursed the ould lady and taught her, ma'am. And, ma'am, the night they took her off, they had *quieted* her, ma'am, so she had no sense, and it was dusk like, and no passers-by just then, and they held her up like between two, and put her in the hack, so nobody suspicioned anything. It was that that started me first: I thought it

was evil work to quiet a young lady out of her senses, and it seemed to me like villainy; and I was sure, ma'am, the saints and the angels and the Lord would not be countenancing such wild doings. Then I took care of the grandmother, and *she* was ould and wise; and she told me Miss Elleanore was right, and she said a many queer things to me, and gave me a message that's been lyin' heavy on my heart since she died: it's eight weeks, ma'am, since we buried the old lady, ma'am. We buried her like a Catholic, ma'am, and we had high mass at the church, but I knew in me soul, ma'am, she'd turned away from all."

Bridget stopped breathless, searched for her handkerchief and wiped her eyes.

"But where is Miss Elleanore?" demanded Mrs. Reyburn, impatiently.

"I *don't* know, ma'am. She's in a convent, and I can't tell where; though her aunt knows, and Father Munot knows too. I came out to-day, scarce knowing what for, but it is me afternoon out, and I could not visit me friends;

and I walked a-past Miss Elleanore's school, and a-past Doctor Grant's, and then I came along here, and I am afeard of me life now, I've told yees all. But, ma'am, if yees will look her up, do it quickly, for I heard Father Munot telling Mrs. Duval a week ago that they'd take Miss Elleanore out of the country, because she wouldn't turn, and they're afeard of her friends."

"A week ago! Out of the country!" Mrs. Reyburn started up, feeling as if every moment were an irreparable delay. She hastened up to the study, and in a few words told the tale to her husband.

"I'll go for Manners," he said, catching his hat; "but, Grace, of all things you must detain that girl."

"Oh dear! I hope she isn't gone!" cried Mrs. Reyburn, running back to the parlor.

"I was afraid you'd gone!" she exclaimed, as she saw Bridget sitting where she had left her, in an attitude of deep dejection.

"Where would I go? said Bridget, in a despairing voice.

"I'm sure I don't want you to go anywhere," replied Mrs. Reyburn: "you can stay here, and if you have told us the truth, and we get Miss Elleanore with us again, I daresay she will befriend you. I must keep you here to-day, and I hope you will stay willingly."

"Shure I will, for now I've informed against me own Church, sure every door in the wide world will be shut against me," replied Bridget.

"Cheer up," said Mrs. Reyburn; "come, I will ask you to come in this little back room, and you can stay there and I will send your tea to you. My little daughter Edna can go there and show you some pictures and puzzles to help pass away the time."

"Shure, you're very kind," said Bridget, "and I wish, wid all me heart, that Miss Elleanore was here wid yees."

Mr. Reyburn found that both Doctor Grant and Mr. Manners were away from their offices, and it was nearly seven o'clock before he got them to his residence and brought Bridget before them. Under Mr. Manners' skillful questioning

Bridget ~~will~~ gave all the information she could about Elleanore.

"We must get a writ of habeas corpus," said Mr. Manners.

"Do be quick about it," said Mrs. Reyburn.

"But the courts are closed; we must wait until to-morrow," replied the lawyer.

"But by to-morrow they may have carried off Elleanore, nobody knows where, if they have not done so already," replied Mrs. Reyburn. "Can you not go and tell Mrs. Duval you have found her out and she must get Elleanore for you at once."

"A second thought would convince you of the rashness of that plan," said Mr. Manners. "We must keep quiet to-night, and to-morrow we will bring the case up in court."

"But what shall we do with Bridget?"

"Oh, Bridget will stay here with you, and you can keep her safe, if she will consent to stay," replied Mr. Manners, looking kindly at Bridget.

"I'll stay," said Bridget; so she was taken by Mrs. Reyburn to a comfortable hall bed-room in

the third story, and securely locked in for the night.

Early the next morning, little Edna Reyburn opened the door of Bridget's room. She found the girl sitting by the window, with a hopeless look, that touched the child's tender heart.

"I hope you slept well, Bridget," she said, gently.

"Not very," replied Bridget. "I hadn't my beads with me to say my prayers, and losing the rosary made me think how I've turned ag'in my own Church. And now I've turned ag'in that, who'll take me in?"

"Jesus Christ will," replied Edna, simply "He is the door, and if you enter in by him you will have all you need. But I hope you didn't go to bed without saying your prayers. Don't you know the Lord's Prayer?"

"Yes, miss. I said that and the creed. Shall I say the prayer to you?"

Edna nodded, and Bridget rattled off the Lord's Prayer in a rapid fashion, adding "Hail Mary, full of grace,' &c.

"Why Bridget! That isn't in the prayer, Bridget," cried Edna.

"Yes it is," said Bridget, positively.

"Oh, I can prove it is not," said Edna, taking up the Bible that lay on the little table. "See, Bridget, here is the Lord's Prayer, and no 'Hail Mary' about it. And this is just the way the Lord taught it to his disciples."

"Well, if it's there you know, and I've been taught wrong; but it's no good showing me the book, for I can't read."

"Can't read the Bible! Why how can you find out how to be good, then?"

"That's just what I'm breaking my heart over," replied Bridget; "I don't know how to be good, and I'm trying to bring over me sister from Ireland and to give the priest his dues, and buy good works, and between them all I'm near driv wild."

"But you can't buy *good works*, Bridget!"

"Yes, I can, if I have the money," said Bridget. "You see the saints and holy people have done a plenty of good works over and

above what the Lord demanded of them, and they're laid up in store for poor sinners like me to buy them; but between wanting good works, and being hard on me clothes, and getting small wages, and wanting to bring over me sister, as I told you, miss, me head is like to turn."

"Now, Bridget," said Edna, seriously, "you remind me of what I read in the Bible about people being laden with burdens they are not able to bear; and I see you've been taught all wrong about these things. If I can teach you to read the Bible, you will soon learn just what God wants of you."

"And would you do it?" eagerly asked Bridget.

"To be sure I would: I'd be glad to."

"You're just like Miss Elleanore," cried the grateful Bridget. "It beats all how kind Protestants are. I believe it's reading the Bible makes the difference."

"There is the bell for breakfast. Will you go down to the kitchen? Our girls will be

very kind to you, and you can get breakfast with them," said Edna, and she led the way down stairs.

As soon as the court opened the next day, Doctor Grant and Mr. Manners were on hand to apply for a writ of habeas corpus against Harriet Duval for the custody of the child, Elleanor Marvin. There was, however, a case to be concluded that had stood over from the day before; and, despite the impatience of these two guardians, the morning passed and half the afternoon was gone before Mr. Manners could bring in his application. The court-room had been crowded to hear the termination of the previous trial, which had been one of importance; and now, when it was found that a case was to be brought before the court involving persons of the position of Mrs. Duval and Father Munot, and which should clear up the mystery which had surrounded the disappearance of Elleanor Marvin, the interest was intense.

But while Mr. Manners is laying his peti-

tion before the court, let us return to the Convent of the ———, which has so long been Elleanore's prison. The plans that had been forming in Mignon's curly head were now at their maturity. While, in the Supreme Court at Nisi Prius, Mr. Manners and Doctor Grant were bringing legal authority to bear at one door of Elleanore's bastille, Mignon's little white fingers were upon the lock of another.

While Mr. Manners was yet chafing at unavoidable delays in court, Mignon had slipped into Sister Mary's room for some precious information about St. Nicholas and his doves, and, while obtaining this, stole the great key from its ring and put it in her pocket. The keys were restored to their basket, and then the guileful little lass assured Sister Mary that she had dreamed if said Sister Mary would say one hundred aves before evening that day, she would have a vision. The old portress addressed herself to her prayers, and Mignon's light feet soon stood under the arch of the hidden gate. Eagerly she fitted the key in its

place and strove to turn it. It did not move. She put a stick through the handle of the key to turn it thus, but the treacherous stick snapped off. There was in the upper part of the garden a fragment of an iron rod. Mignon remembered and obtained it, and exerting all her strength, the key turned in the unused wards and the bolt slipped back. Then, oh what strong temptation came over Mignon to open the gate and fly! She stole back to the side of the garden fountain and dabbled with her little hand in the limpid water, while she reasoned with herself that Elleanore must go first and alone, that there might hereafter be a place of refuge for Mignon. Elleanore had friends to protect her; Mignon's only friends were leagued with the convent. Strong were her efforts for self-control, and then our little heroine, ball in hand, went jumping along where she knew Elleanore was sitting.

"The gate is open! steal away!" she said. A thrill of intense feeling shot through Elleanore's lately languid frame at these words. The

gate opened ! Freedom, freedom long unknown, freedom sighed for with unutterable desiring, was before her. By the path she had trodden so many times she stole away: hardly was she hidden by the shrubbery when Mignon, darting off in an opposite direction, fell headlong on the gravel-walk and raised a direful clamor. Elleanore heard the outcry, but if she had heard the convent fall, roof and walls, with a mighty crash, she would not have turned. Never fled poor Israelite with more eager feet to the city of refuge, hearing, with every beat of his laboring heart, the footfalls of the avenger close behind, seeing his shadow cast from every bush and tree, than fled Elleanore to that busy world from which she had been snatched to a living burial, and where now warm hearts and happy homes were waiting for her coming. She stood underneath the arch, she pushed the gate with all her strength, it swung ajar, just far enough for her to crowd her slight figure through ; then, delaying to push it close again for Mignon's sake, she sped away. She thought not that she went

without cape or shawl or gloves, in the plain black lawn and round black hat her aunt had provided for her at the convent. She had no money for car-fare, and she feared pursuit, when suddenly she saw a stalwart policeman not far from her, his silver star gleaming upon her like the star of hope. One look assured her of his American origin and mature years. She hoped he was not one of those who served Rome first, and America where Rome permitted. To this guardian of the public peace she turned.

"Sir, will you call a hack and take me to No. 362 — street?" she said, giving Mr. Reyburn's residence.

The man looked at her in evident amazement.

"Be good enough to do so at once; it is *very* important," she said. There was that in Elleanore's manner that could not be denied: the officer called the hack, gave the requisite directions, and, handing, Elleanore to a seat, took his place opposite her, and they rolled away to Mr. Reyburn's.

Mrs. Grant and Mrs. Reyburn. who in the

parlor of the latter were waiting with inxious hearts for news of Elleanore, were confounded to see a hack stop before the door, from which sprang the dear object of their cares.

The two ladies rushed to the door regardless of the amazement of any passers-by, and each seized the long-absent girl as if they were ordained to hold her against the grasp of a thousand foes. Mrs. Grant was the first to recover her composure, and explaining to the policeman the state of the case, handing him pay for the hackman, requested him to drive at once to the court-room and inform Mr. Manners of the safe arrival of his ward at Mr. Reyburn's.

Meanwhile the house was jubilant. Bridget stood at one moment sobbing, at the next laughing and clapping her hands. Mrs. Reyburn's cook rushed after a cup of tea, a beverage which was Elleanore's "favorite aversion." Bobby dragged up an easy-chair as for an invalid, and the chambermaid came with a bottle of cologne, as if somebody had fainted. Small Edith lugged in no less than three new dolls, and Edna

appeared with a fan and a basket of cake while Mrs. Reyburn had some faint idea of closing the doors and barricading the windows, lest the precious girl should be violently carried off: Mrs. Grant, feasting her eyes on her treasure, wondered if they had not better send for a policeman or two to guard the house "until the gentlemen came home."

Meanwhile, at the convent, collected by Mignon's screams, the pupils and their guardian sisters came to pick the child up and to inquire into her wounds and bruises. However, after a minute or two, Mignon admitted she had been more frightened than hurt, wiped her face and hands on Sister Martha's handkerchief, and declared herself ready for a "good game of hide-and-seek." Mignon's hiding consisted in going into the arched gateway and locking the gate which Elleanore had thoughtfully shut. Then, at the next turn of the game, she slipped off to Sister Mary's room, and, aided by her own dexterity and the half-blind nun's preoccupation, she got the key back in its place.

When Elleanore's flight was discovered, what a stir there was about the convent! Every door and gate and window was examined, but all were secure. Sister Mary was summoned by the Superior, and her keys inquired into. They were hanging at the porteress' girdle, and being examined none were missing. Sister Mary in all good faith averred that not one had been out of her keeping, but she went a little farther than truth permitted, and declared no one but herself "ever had put a finger on them." The escape was a mystery. On this mystery Sister Ann made some remark to Mignon, when that elf of mischief burst into a hearty laugh.

"What are you laughing at?" asked Sister Ann, sternly.

"Why, she isn't gone!" said Mignon.

"Yes, she is," replied Sister Ann.

"But how could she go, unless she's a witch?" demanded Mignon.

"I don't know, but she's gone."

"How well you put it on!" laughed Mignon.

"Put what on?" asked the nun.

"The heretic's getting off. She didn't go away."

"Where is she, then?"

"Why, you've got her locked up, Sister Ann, because she wouldn't turn; haven't you, now?"

This view of the case came to be accepted by the pupils, and indeed by many of the sisters. To them the convent foundations were an awful dungeon, where the obstinate heretic was suffering for her opposition to the only true Church.





CHAPTER IX.

TO no one but Mr. Manners did Elleanore tell the way of her escape from the convent. She knew that the sisters would soon learn where she was, and be on the alert to discover how she had left them, and the story of Mignon's aid could hardly spread without their hearing it.

"That is a fine, bright girl!" cried Mr. Manners, when Elleanore had finished her story of convent-life and the exodus through the arched gateway. "I wish she were here this minute, that I might shake hands with her and praise her as she deserves. Be sure not to mention your mode of escape to any one else."

"I did not intend to," replied Elleanore.

"And, Elleanore, I am sure from all you tell me that this child means to get away from the convent and come to you. Now I am ready and anxious to befriend her and cheat the convent of its prey: it would do me good."

"I would do anything for Mignon," said Elleanore, "and I would gladly pay all her expenses of support and education. Her faults are largely due to her education. It is not strange, with the teaching she has had, that she should think deceit lawful in a good cause; and a great deal of her perverseness has been assumed to prevent her being made a nun."

"Did Mignon ever ask you where you lived, or try to get information as to how to go from the convent to your home?"

"Yes, very particularly; and though she has been more than a year in the convent, it is truly wonderful how exactly she remembers localities and directions. I told her my home was at Doctor Grant's, and just where it was."

"She will make her way off and get to you, and I shall be ready to take charge of her. If

she comes, take her in and make no stir about it; and send for me, no matter what time it is."

"I will," said Elleanore. "Glad enough shall I be to see the little captive free, and under good influences."

Elleanore remained at Mr. Reyburn's for the night after the day of her escape. When she had gone to her quiet room, and was sitting by her table with a feeling of sweet content and gratitude, reading that Holy Bible of which she had been so long deprived, she heard a tap at her door. She opened it, and there was Bridget.

"Come in, Bridget," she said, kindly; "sit down." Bridget sat upon a low stool, and resting her folded arms on her knees, looked at the young lady some moments, as if she could hardly convince herself that she really saw her again.

"I've a dale to say to yees, miss," she said—"a dale to tell, and advice to ask, which I couldn't well do when so many were around yees."

"Very well, Bridget, I am ready to listen to you."

"The first is about the ould lady. I had the

care of her after yeess left us, and I saw, miss, that she wasn't like she used to be. She didn't touch the rosary or the crucifix, but let them lie idle on the bed, while she had her hands clasped and her eyes shut and her lips moving, praying like, by the hour. She was a howly woman; I know that. She'd not talk of the Virgin, but of Jesus Christ; and when I spoke of the saints, she said they couldn't help her, and she told me a dale about Jesus, miss, and said she learned it all of you. And she said to me, 'Bridget, you're wrong, and our Church is wrong; take my word for it, Bridget. I walked well-nigh eighty years in fear of death, and now I'm free in Christ.' And her last dying word was—Mrs. Duval and me bein' wid her—'Tell Elleanore I died trusting in none but Jesus.' I kept it in me mind, miss, to tell you."

Elleanore had listened to Bridget's tale with her face shaded by the hand on which she leaned, a tear or two rolling over her cheeks as she heard: they were tears of joy. Her dear old grandparent! eighty years in bondage to fear of

death, and the sting of death is sin; but she had learned at last to lay the burden at the feet of Jesus, and was made free in her Saviour.

"Your account has made me very happy, Bridget," she said.

"There's many a thing of late struck me mind, and made me doubt if I was in the thrue Church, after all," said Bridget; "and here's Mrs. Reye-burn says, just as I am bewailing being out of a place, that her chambermaid's going to get married, and I may live here. And now, miss, the old lady was in bondage eighty years, and I've been in the same twenty-four years, and I'm weary of it, miss; and now I'm going to Protestant meeting, and little Miss Edna is going to teach me to read the Bible, and I'll pray to the Lord Jesus; and if I get peace like the ould lady did, it's me heart will sing for joy."

"I am glad to hear you say this, Bridget. Here you will have kind friends and they will teach you, and I hope you will indeed attend first to gaining God's peace for your soul."

The next day Elleanore returned to her

guardian's. The doctor thought she was looking pale and thin, and ordered her off to his sister's in the country for a short visit. Leaving strict charges about Mignon with Mrs. Grant, Elleanore went, but when she returned she found that Mignon had not yet made her appearance.

Teachers in various branches were engaged to come to Doctor Grant's to give Elleanore instruction, and she went no more to school. Under the genial influences of home and friends, Elleanore soon recovered her health and buoyant spirits, but one cause of anxiety pressed upon her. Where was Mignon?

"Patience, patience," said Mr. Manners. "From what you have told me I know the child is bound to succeed in whatever she undertakes. You will see her yet."

Though Bridget pursued the course she had indicated to Elleanore, and went to church with the Reyburns, and studied her lessons with all zeal, it is not to be supposed that the legends and superstitions which had filled her

mind from infancy dropped out of her belief all at once. To many of the absurdities of the Romish Church she gave reverent credence still. As the restored blind man saw men as trees walking, so Bridget, emerging from Papal darkness to the clear light of Protestantism, saw the new truths strangely interwoven with the old fables.

One evening, while Mr. and Mrs. Reyburn were entertaining visitors in the parlor, they heard frequent and loud shouts of mirth from Master Bob, which did not cease until his usual bed-time. The next morning, when the three children had assembled in the little chamber set apart for a school-room, where their mother conducted their daily lessons, Mrs. Reyburn asked Bob what had so pleased him on the previous evening.

"Why, mother," he replied, "Edna was no company for me, for she was lost in a book, and I got tired of playing solitaire, for I couldn't make it go right; so I went down into the kitchen, and the cook was out, and Bridget

was sewing her apron, so I stayed with her, and she told me stories."

"What did she tell you?" asked Mrs. Reyburn.

"Oh," replied Bob, "some of the funniest things about Satan and the saints. I remembered them all, to make Edna and Edith laugh."

"You may repeat them now and free your mind of them, and do not again listen to any of Bridget's 'saint' stories. They are false and foolish, and she is to be pitied for having been deceived by so many of them."

"Well," said Bob, thrusting his hands into his pockets, well pleased at having listeners, "she told me how Saint Dunstan saw Satan once, and he caught him, with a pair of tongs, by the nose—that is, the saint caught Satan by the nose, and pinched him until Satan squealed like a pig."

"I don't think that is funny," said the sedate Edna; but Edith, catching Bob's infectious mirth, danced up and down the room in high delight.

"Well, Edna, isn't this funny? She told me

that Saint Dominicus made Satan hold a lighted candle, and it burnt down and scorched his fingers. I think Satan must have been very stupid." Still Edna did not seem amused, and Bob unfolded a third tale: "And then Saint Lupus shut Satan up in a pot all night; isn't it a pity he ever let him out again?"

"Robert," said Mrs. Reyburn, "do you think there is any truth in these things?"

"Why, no, ma'am, of course not; but it is so queer that people ever thought to make them up."

"Hearing these things, my son, should make you feel very sorry for the thousands of poor children to whom they are told for truth. And you should be willing to save your money and give it to those who are seeking, by missionaries and good books, to teach these poor children and their parents the truth of God."

"I will, mother," said Robert, growing serious as his mother spoke earnestly.

"Me too!" cried Edith. "I've got two pennies in my pocket now!"

Edna took occasion, after Bridget's next

lesson, to tell her how false were the legends she had repeated to Robert.

"And are all those stories I've heard, about the miracles of St. Patrick and St. Dunstan and St. Agnes and the rest, not true?" asked the girl.

"No, they are all wicked falsehoods."

"But there's poetry about 'em, and pictures of 'em," urged Bridget.

"I can't help it; they're false," maintained Edna; "and you must hurry and learn to read your Bible and Sunday-school books, so that your mind can get full of better things."

Bridget, who had accepted Edna as her teacher in all things, now said: "Well, there's another thing, miss; you told me I couldn't buy 'good works;' now, how am I to get them, for I'm such a sinner I never can do them. If I was like Miss Elleanore, now."

"You couldn't do them then," said Edna. "The Bible says there is none that doeth good, no not one; and if we do al' that we can, we are unprofitable servants"

"But I've heard the Pope had a store of them laid up somewhere, done over and above by holy saints, to be sold to sinners like me."

"There is no such store of good works, the Bible says. Noah, Daniel and Job could not save anybody, not even their sons or daughters, by their righteousness. Every one is bound to be good and to keep God's law, and even if he did this he would have no merit to spare for others."

"But what can we do, then?" asked Bridget.

"Why, just trust the Lord Jesus Christ; he did it all when he died and rose; and all we have to do is to trust and love him, and try and please him. He was God, and did not need to suffer for his own sins, because he had none. But he suffered for our sins, and so can save all poor sinners who trust in him."

"Is that all?" asked Bridget.

"Yes, that's all," said Edna.

"My! but isn't it *beautiful*?" cried Bridget, drawing a deep breath. "I wish I could just fix it on me heart for ever!"

Bridget thought herself very happy at Mr.

Reyburn's. She was improving in her work, learning to read, her wardrobe was more respectable, and to send to Ireland for her sister seemed much more within the reach of possibility. "Then me sister and me will soon earn enough to bring out the mother," she said, hopefully. But over Bridget's bright dreams was to come the cloud of disappointment. A letter came for her one morning, which she joyfully took to Edna to have read, but her joy turned to bitter lamentations when she heard the sad news that her mother was dead. The whole family sympathized with the poor girl's sorrow, and Elleanore, coming in and hearing of Bridget's trouble, offered her all the consolation she could.

"I meant to give you money on Christmas to make enough, with what you have, to bring over your mother and sister, and I will now give you what is necessary to bring your sister here at once," said Elleanore.

This promise greatly cheered Bridget, and in a few days the money was sent out to bring the beloved sister to America.

What joy was it to Bridget, when Mary came, to find that that dear sister had, in the time of the great revival in Ireland, learned to trust alone in the precious blood of Christ for the salvation of her soul! Mrs. Grant took Mary to her house, where she was a faithful and valued servant.

Mr. Manners had come to Doctor Grant's to call one day, when from the parlor-window he saw Father Munot passing on the other side of the street.

"Elleanore," he exclaimed, "whenever I see that man, I feel angry to think I did not carry on that case and get him into trouble for taking you off. He and your aunt Duval ought both to have suffered for it. If it had not been for you, they would."

"The matter was made quite public in the papers," replied Elleanore, "and I dreaded the excitement and publicity of a trial, and could not forget that Aunt Duval was my father's sister, and I felt for my cousins."

"It's a pity that they could not have their

deserts," cried Mr. Manners, with much heat. "I can never cease to feel that these Roman Catholics, as a Church, are hostile to our free institutions. The ballot-box, the sacred ark of American liberty, is prostituted to their purposes. They vote for a man because he will further the interests of father Pope and mother Church, and not because he will be the right man for the country. Our boasted trial by jury is too often turned into a Church question. How many times have I argued a case when I felt sure some of the jurymen were determined to say 'not guilty,' because the prisoner was a Romanist! Their notion that the priest's *absolvo te* can do away with their sins encourages them to commit those crimes that fill our court records. They live in sin, and die sure of being carried to Abraham's bosom in the arms of mother Church."

"Are you not too severe?" said Mrs. Grant.

"Not a bit," said Mr. Manners; "and seeing that old priest makes me think of poor little Mignon. When is that child going to get loose?"

"Never, I'm afraid," said Elleanore, with feeling.

And really how fared it with Mignon as these short December days darkened around her? The roses and lilies had faded in the convent-garden; the later glories of the dahlia, the aster and the marigold had passed away. No longer the jessamine vine rung its waxen or golden bells on every breeze; the honeysuckle had shed its sprays of flame, and the trumpet-creeper had lost its flaunting splendors, and flapped dry and lifeless stalks against the sustaining wall. Over the gravel-walks the dead leaves drifted, fit emblems of the wasted lives of those who trod them; from the great basin of the fountain the limpid wave had slipped away, as Romish faith and priestly promises shall slip away from cold hearts at the hour of death.

And through this chilliness and dreariness of decay wandered poor Mignon, desolate as that fabled child whom envious elfs had carried to the goblin dwellings underground. Week after

week she had taxed every power of invention, tried every wile, to open for herself those gates of liberty that at her touch had unfolded for Elleanore.

In vain: never had the Argus-eyed Superior and her faithful coadjutors so closely watched the prison-house whereof they were keepers. They were resolved that no second novice or pupil should escape. Sister Mary had no vision, but she had suspicions which she dared not name that Mignon had helped Elleanore away, and henceforth she watched her keys with jealous care—far better indeed than she watched her selfish soul.

Day after day Mignon planned and hoped and waited and suffered disappointment, until her child-heart grew sick with that hope deferred which the Royal Preacher felt so long ago. She was quiet enough in the school-room now; her spirits were too much broken to engage in her former freaks; and the Superior told her that in another year her novitiate should begin. Rather than that this should be,

Mignon resolved that she would starve herself to death, and so be free.

Grieving over all these troubles, and longing to indulge her feelings with some visible outpouring, Mignon stole off one cheerless morning to the chapel, because there she could be most alone, and dropping her little figure on the floor of one of the aisles, she wept and moaned. Whilst she lay there in utter friendlessness and misery, Sister Agnes found her and gently asked the cause of such bitter woe.

Sitting down on the raised platform of the chancel, Sister Agnes drew Mignon toward her, and as the child rested her tired head in her lap, the nun urged her to confide to her her trials.

"Oh, Sister Agnes," sobbed Mignon, "I hate the convent, and I want to be free. It seems as if all these walls were crushing me and smothering me. I can never be a nun: I hate the convent and the priests and the sisters, and I've tried to get away ever since Elleanore did, and I can't, and I know I shall die if I don't. I know you won't tell on me, Sister Agnes, you

are so different from the rest of them. Do you think, Sister Agnes, that I ought to stay and be a nun?"

"Poor child! poor child!" said Sister Agnes, tenderly caressing Mignon's curly head. "Poor little girl! with no home but this. Do you know, Mignon, what a great, wide, rude place the world is for homeless and friendless children? Do you think how poverty and sin are ready, like monsters, to devour those who have no parents or homes to shelter them?"

"Oh but, Sister Agnes, I would not be alone or friendless or homeless, for Elleanore is rich and kind, and if I could get to her she would take care of me, and I'd be her little true sister—not a nun sister, though."

"How do you know this, Mignon?"

"She said so—she promised?"

Agnes' thoughts were very busy for a few moments; then she placed a hand on either of Mignon's tear-wet cheeks and lifted up her face. "Tell me, Mignon," she said, "was it through you that Elleanore got away?"

Mignon's eyes fell under the nun's steady gaze.

"Speak—do not be afraid," said Agnes.

"Yes," said Mignon, in a whisper; "I let her go. Shall I tell you how it all was?"

"No," said Agnes, mildly; "I do not want to hear."

"Sister Agnes," said Mignon, earnestly, "do you think convents are right and good, and that God made them?"

Agnes answered not, and Mignon asked again, "Sister Agnes, do you think I should be good or happy being a nun?"

Still the sister was silent; and yet, with a new hope rising in her breast, Mignon pressed her questions: "Sister Agnes, won't you, won't you help me out?"

"How have you tried to get away, Mignon?"

"Every way," said Mignon, desperately. "I've watched the side gate, where the sisters go out and in, a hundred times, to escape behind them, but I never could."

Agnes' breath came short; she grew paler than

ever, she clasped her hands in the excitement of what was to the gentle nun a terrible resolve; but she looked at Mignon and remembered how her own young life had been blighted and her soul fed on ashes.

"Dry your eyes, Mignon, and go to your books," she said. "This afternoon I go out to visit the sick, and just at dark I will enter the side gate; it will not be well for me to see or hear any one there, but—"

"Don't say any more!" cried Mignon, her face transfigured with joyful hope. "Ah, Sister Agnes, there is one good nun!"

Yes, Mignon was right—a good nun, and other such there are, good in spite of being a nun!

How long was the day to Mignon—how drearily lagged the hours! She saw Sister Agnes go out to minister to the sick, and more welcome than any other nun was mild Agnes to the dying; bending above them, she spoke not of masses for the dead or of the help of sainted men, but of laying all our sins on Jesus, the Lamb of God

As the twilight gathered around, Mignon

crouched behind a clump of bushes, thick with branches, though the leaves had fallen. The gate sprung open to a gentle touch. Agnes stooped on the pavement to pick up something she had dropped. Softly between her and the wall glided Mignon—on in the shadow of the wall—on toward the city; then, trusting to the twilight, sped more boldly out into vacant places on to the busy street where cars were running; and then, as one had stopped to take on a passenger, she said, springing to the step, "*Please* let me ride on the platform just a few blocks," so beseechingly that the conductor could not deny her. Sitting on the platform, her head bowed on her knees to hide her face, she waited until the right street was called, and with a simple word of thanks, she hastened along the sidewalk, turning here and there, scanning now the numbers carefully, and at last darted into an area and knocked with all her might. Just as she did so, Mr. Manners in the parlor had said, "When is that child going to get loose?" and to him Elleanore answered sadly, thinking of

the convent restraints, and of the long days she had waited, "Never, I'm afraid."

It was the utterance of human fear and not of faith.

But she of whom they spoke was near. It was now dark; Mr. Manners was just taking his hat to return to his office, when one of the servants reported a little girl down stairs asking for Elleanore.

"It is one of my mission class, I think," said Elleanore, expecting some tale of poverty and application for help. "Good-night, Mr. Manners."

She ran down stairs, but Mr. Manners yet lingered at the parlor-door, talking to Dr. Grant.

Elleanore, tripping lightly to the lower hall, was as amazed as that maiden of old "when Peter stood without the gate." That slender figure that stood shivering under the swinging lamp, with cheeks and hands nipped by the frosty December air, and with a handkerchief tied over the crisp curls, was no other than the despaired-of Mignon.

Elleanore's joy translated Mignon's to English

"Oh my darling! my darling!" she cried, clasping her in a loving embrace. Then, holding her fast by the hand, she drew her in haste to the entrance-hall, and catching in her eagerness her departing guardian by the arm, she cried, "See Mr. Manners! She is here. She is here!"

"Bless my heart," cried the doctor, "what in the world is all this?"

But Mr. Manners, comprehending the situation, and alert for all that might happen, said, "Take her up to your room and say nothing, for they may look here for her."

Elleanore obeyed, and soon had Mignon in her own room toasting her chilled hands and feet before the glowing fire in the grate.

Mr. Manners and Mrs. Grant went up to the room also, and after Elleanore had introduced Mignon to her friends, Mr. Manners said—

"Now, Mignon, your convent-folks may look for you where Elleanore is, but if you'll trust to me, I will take you where you'll be safe, and in five or six months Elleanore shall come and see you."

Mignon looked questioningly at Elleanore.

"Yes, Mignon," said Elleanore, "trust to Mr. Manners; he is my guardian and true friend: he will take good care of you."

"Very well," said Mignon, to the lawyer; "you can do as you please with me, if you don't let the convent get me."

"I'll take care of that," said the lawyer, laughing.

"Now, Elleanore, give Mignon her supper up here, and dress her up, and say nothing to the servants, and do not ask me any questions whatever I do; I'll be here in an hour."

"He is going to take her off somewhere," said Mrs. Grant; "and you had better dress her as little like herself as possible."

"What shall I dress her in?" asked Elleanore.

"There is a trunk with some of your out-grown clothes in the trunk-room; you will most likely find something in that. I'll have the man bring it down here for you, whilst I get the child's supper."

Elleanore found a plaid worsted dress, a me-

rino cloak and a little down-trimmed hood in the trunk, which she soon adapted to Mignon. "All these things would be nice for Mignon," she said to Mrs. Grant, who came in with a tray of sandwiches, cake and preserves.

"Just lock the trunk up, and send it along with her, and mention to Mr. Manners what it is," said Mrs. Grant.

Mignon ate her supper, dressed herself in the clothing Elleanore had provided, and Elleanore with brush and oil reduced her curls to something like smoothness, and tied a veil over her face.

Scarcely was this done before Mr. Manners returned, and without delay led Mignon to the carriage which had brought him. The trunk was put on the rack and they drove away.

It was several days before Elleanore again saw the lawyer: he then told her that Mignon was well and happy, and that he hoped Elleanore would be able to visit her the next summer. He did not state where she was, but in truth he had taken her to a most excellent boarding-school for

girls, in one of the Eastern States, where, with many charges both to Mignon and her teachers, he left her, rejoicing in her escape, and sheltered in the simple kindness of Protestantism—to pursue those studies which would fit her for a happy and useful life.

Under the guardianship of Mr. Manners, and cared for by Elleanore's liberality, there is no doubt that Mignon is safe from the living tomb she dreaded, and that before her spreads a future bright with love and activity, instead of the gloom and repression of the convent.

Mignon had not been gone many days before Elleanore was favored with a visit from Father Munot. She found the priest standing in the parlor, and, bowing coldly, she did not offer him a chair, but remained standing while the interview lasted.

"Miss Marvin," said the priest, "it may not be new to you to learn that that wicked and misguided child, Mignon Murray, has, unpermitted, left the convent."

"In other words," said Elleanore, bluntly,

"she has run away. Excuse my saying I am not sorry to hear it."

"We thought it likely she had come to you. She is our charge, given by her only relative to our keeping; we cannot forego our claim on her."

Elleanore made no reply.

"Is she here?"

"No."

"Has she been here?"

"She has."

"And where, then, is she?"

"I do not know."

"What can you tell me about her?"

"Only this," said Elleanore: "she came here on the edge of evening, we gave her her supper, a worsted dress, coat and hood; and after being here about an hour she went away—where, I do not know. I asked her no questions, and have not seen her since. It will be quite useless to ask for further information. I shall answer you no more"

"A lega' process," said the exasperated priest,

"may make you more explicit. We have a legal claim to that child, which we will enforce."

"A sort of claim which, you will please remember, you did not have on me. Do not suggest a 'legal process' to me, Mr. Munot. The law might prove but an unwelcome friend to you and your coadjutors in crime. It will not need a great effort for you to recollect that you *kidnapped me*, and held me a prisoner in a manner that the law will not be slow to recognize and punish. That little affair has not yet been settled to the satisfaction of my guardians; and a simple *silence* on my part will be quite enough to encourage them to bring you and your helpers to justice. I advise you to cease the search for Mignon: consider her the price of my imprisonment. Let not the guilty violators of the law talk of appealing to it in such a case as this. I bid you good evening."

Elleanore left the room. As she reached the head of the stairs, she heard the outer door close behind Father Munot. Thereafter she several times met him in the street, but they passed as

utter strangers. Those who knew not Elleanore's history would never have thought the old priest she had passed so calmly on the pavement had held her in such long captivity in the Convent of the — —.

To the convent the escape of Mignon savored of the miraculous. Their hold upon all their wards seemed inexplicably loosened: there had been two escapes. Nearly all the sisters were closely questioned, but Agnes, whose sweetness and purity had set her on an unapproachable height above the rest, was simply asked if Mignon had been near the gate when she went out.

"I went and came alone," said Agnes, quietly; and to her dreams that night came happy images of Elleanore and Mignon, blessed in the light of some loving home.



CHAPTER X.

ON one of those bright December mornings which were clearly smiling on Mignon's new freedom, Eugenia Duval was preparing to attend a *matinée*. Caring only for the fleet-footed vanities of earth, it is no wonder that Eugenia spent long time, much care and money in preparing for her pleasure. Very rich was the thick purple silk that fell in shining folds to her feet; elegant indeed the black velvet coat, with choice lace trimming; faultless the elaborate collar; and the dainty white hat, with its clustering roses, set off her beautiful face as a fine frame sets off a picture.

Satisfied with her decorations, Eugenia tripped down the stairway, but paused a moment for a parting glance at the fascinating new bonnet, in

the glass that ornamented the hat-rack. To Belshazzar in the midst of his revelry came, through the avenue of sight, terror that froze his heart; so now, in the height of her vanity, came to Eugenia, on the highway of sound, an appalling warning. The parlor door was ajar, and her mother was receiving a call. Standing by the glass, Eugenia heard words whose first utterance held her in a fascinated terror to listen to the end. It was the voice of the family physician that spoke thus: "From childhood, I have seen in Eugenia the prophecy of that disease that carried off her father. Excuse a warning so given by an old friend, who claims, moreover, the privileges of your family physician."

"I appreciate your kindness, doctor," said Mrs. Duval, in a faltering voice, "but who can tell how you pain me? Eugenia is, even more than my other children, the idol of my heart. In her my pride is satisfied. You surely must be mistaken. She is never ill."

"I cannot be mistaken: there are signs I have

read too often. At the last party you gave, and the other evening at my own house, in very many such assemblies lately, I have seen her; and that transparent hand, the color that comes and goes too soon, the unnatural brightness of the eye, the panting breath, are only a part of the tokens that have never deceived me. For this I came to see you: if she goes on in the gay life she is now leading, a few months will hurry her to the grave; but by proper dress, avoidance of excitement, regarding regular hours and maintaining a calm and cheerful frame of mind, you may prolong her life, and have the satisfaction of feeling that your duty is done. I could not see her sacrificed without this warning."

"You are very kind," said Mrs. Duval's tremulous voice; "but what shall I do?"

Eugenia had heard enough. She dared not stay and risk meeting, at once, her mother's anxious eye. She stepped softly to the door and went out. But for her what blackness had fallen over the face of nature! Over all

life lay the dull pall of death. The joyous crowds, the stir of business, the brilliant store-windows all ready for the merry holiday time, were full to her of tolling bells, of slow-moving hearses and sable plumes. Among the laughing crowds she stood, like Iphigenia, the allotted victim for the sacrifice. What bitter and evil fate demanded the young heart that had beaten so few years? Why should death freeze to marble the feet that had danced so light a round? To the *matinée*, to which she had looked with the bright anticipation of youth new to such enjoyments, she could not go. It was idle to sit and watch life acted on the stage, when all of life was a tragedy or a farce, and death the only hard and black reality in a world of shows. She wandered along, her veil dropped over her anguished face, scarce knowing where she went, listening to the ceaseless tread of feet, and thinking, dully, how they would trample on when she was dust, and their echoes, wandering off above her grave, should wake no answer there! Among these thoughts

came a vague memory that she had read in a paper how the Month's Mind of Father M^r-Beede was to be celebrated that day in the Church of the Holy Virgin. She was near the church, which may have called it up, and so entered with a hope that such a service might suit her state of feeling. The office for the dead was being recited. Eugenia sat down in a remote corner of the church, and bowed her head on the back of the seat before her. The dreary words of death chimed with her oppressed feelings. How soon would they be uttered for her? A solemn requiem mass followed, and all the air seemed burdened and all the light of day darkened with the curse of death.

Home again and at the table, the thought haunted her—how the four at the table should presently be reduced to three, and her chair set no more. To her room—the room she had lavishly arranged for her own comfort and gratification. Soon, too soon, that room, closed and darkened, would be avoided as a re-

minder of the dead. These ideas pressing upon her for days, no wonder that her cheek blanched, her appetite failed, usual amusements lost their zest, and the anxious eye of the mother filled often with tears as she supposed she saw already the ravages of disease. One evening, as Eugenia had thrown herself on the sofa, her hands loosely clasped, her eyes half closed, a sigh now and then stirring her heart, her mother watched her with painful emotion. Eugenia, with the fatal folly of the monomaniac, was going over and over again the words she had heard the physician utter, and was tracing in herself the symptoms he had mentioned. How often had her side and chest been weary and painful! how often had her rest been disturbed, and the morning greeted by a short, hacking cough! She was evidently far worse than the doctor thought. As she pondered thus, her mother came and sat down by her, and said, tenderly, "Eugenia, my dear child, what is troubling you?"

The loving, sympathizing tone broke down the

barriers of Eugenia's reserve, and she burst into a passion of tears. "Oh, mother," she sobbed, "I heard what the doctor said to you the other morning, and it is breaking my heart. Why must I die?"

"Oh, Eugenia!" cried the terrified mother, "you are mistaken, child. The doctor did not mean anything of that kind."

"No, mother, I am not mistaken. I heard all he said, plainly; he says, at best, I can only live a short time, and, mother, I *cannot* die; I must live: I have just begun to enjoy life. It is for the old to die, but not for me."

"Oh, Eugenia, my idol," said the distressed parent, "how gladly would I put myself in your place!"

"But you can't do that, mother," sighed Eugenia, "and what *can* we do?"

"We can do a great deal," replied Mrs. Duval, with energy. "We will send to-morrow for the doctor; he must be mistaken: he will find that he is wrong, and you can rest a little, and take tonics, and be stronger than ever."

"It is of no use," said Eugenia, despairingly; "my doom is sealed."

The next day the doctor was sent for. Bitterly regretting that what he had intended as a wise warning to the mother had been a death-blow to the daughter's happiness, he said, within himself, "I'll never tell what I think again," and pursuing this plan, he strove to convince Eugenia that she was in good health, but needing a little rest. But he could not so easily undo what he had done. Eugenia was cheered, but felt still as if early death was her doom. As days went by, she recalled what Elleanore had once said to her about preparation for death—that such preparation would not shorten life, but by robbing us of a future fear would place our present joys on a firmer foundation.

"I will prepare for death," said Eugenia, and to carry out this resolution, she begged her mother to send for Father Munot, whom she had for some time avoided.

"A good Catholic like yourself need not fear death," said the priest. "To be sure, you have

been a little remiss at the confessional and in religious duties of late, but we can make that all right. No true child of the Church can be lost. Hell is not for them, but for those who reject the truth. We may need the purification of purgatory, and then—heaven for ever.”

“On these questions,” returned Eugenia, “I am all adrift. To me, the grave with its darkness, its silence, its corruption, is hell. Heaven with its angels is a land of shadows, a tale of the nursery. Religion has in it so much of fable that I have come to regard it as all a fable.”

“What!” cried the astonished priest, “do you reject the holy Church and her teachings?”

“No,” replied Eugenia; “I am willing to believe and accept anything and everything that will give me peace.”

“For the teachable soul the way is easy,” said Father Munot.

“I have said,” continued Eugenia, “that I believed death was an eternal sleep—that after we had lived our day we returned, soul and body,

into nothingness, from whence we came. But this theory I now *feel* to be false."

"It is false," said the priest; "the soul is eternal; so shall the body be after its resurrection; for that eternity you must now prepare. But do not distress yourself—the preparation does not suggest immediate need of it. I see before you a long and excellent life; and for all true Catholics—and such are you, both by your baptism and confirmation—such preparation is an easy matter: they have but to cast themselves as helpless infants into the arms of the Church, and she will carry them safely into eternal joy and peace."

"Instruct me then, Father Munot, and you will find me a willing pupil," replied Eugenia. "My great desire now is to feel that I am *safe* in the event of death, and then to cherish to the best of my ability the life I so much love."

Pursuant to the practice of his Church, the reverend father prescribed for Eugenia the repetition of many prayers, strict attention to the offices of the Church and the performance

of penances. He advised her to keep carefully all the fast and saints' days, bade her choose a patron saint whom she might besiege with prayers, and through whose intercession she might hope for much. Terribly in earnest now, Eugenia followed every direction with scrupulous care. No zealot was ever more devout than the lately scoffing Eugenia. Victoria looked at her with wonder; her mother, with secret grief, saw the idol she had hoped to set in the high places of earth for all to worship, snatched away to mourning and anxiety, and in her heart she upbraided Him who doomed her to such bitter disappointment.

"You are doing well," said Father Munot to Eugenia; "I can ask for nothing more. You should not yield to doubt; all is secure: so faithful, so teachable, so devout a daughter of the Church cannot be lost."

"I am *not* doing well," replied Eugenia. "My soul is tossed with ten thousand doubts. The religious books you lend me seem to me idle tales. I cannot believe them; my mind re-

fuses them, while my heart longs to trust them. I know that I am not fit to die; my soul shudders back from death as from destruction;" and in the extremity of her misery she mourned wretchedly, "Oh that I had never been born!"

"The holy season of Lent is near," said the puzzled ecclesiastic; "you must devote that to a rigid observance of religious duties; meditating on the various lessons the Church then sets forth to you, you will surely find comfort.

But Lenten days brought no peace to Eugenia. To and from church services she wandered, miserable and restless as those fabled unburied souls that wailing press about the Stygian stream.

"Father Munot, "said the poor girl to her blind guide, "I have sometimes felt that if I went to a convent for a while, I should get rest to my mind. Perhaps if I abstract myself entirely from the things that formerly pleased me, and lead, for a time, a life of continued prayer and meditation, my soul will find rest."

"It is a commendable thought, and a plan you would do well to follow," said the priest.

Mrs. Duval, however, heard Eugenia's proposition with unfeigned distress.

"Oh, my child," she urged, "do not give yourself to such a living death."

"But, mother," said Eugenia, "I suffer death each day. I shall lose my reason if this conflict is not stilled. I do not mean to be a nun, but simply to go to the convent until I feel ready to die."

"You are ready to die! you are good and lovely and pure—none more so. Stay here, my darling. Amuse yourself as youth should; enjoy yourself. You will forget this fear of early doom, and live to old age."

Thus spoke the woman in the prime of her life, exulting in robust health, who felt that from her death was far distant; but the frail girl, who knew her days were numbered and very few, only moaned for answer, "I am not ready to die. If you love me, mother, let me go."

Eugenia was as the apple of her mother's eye: she could refuse her nothing. Folding

her in her arms with a look of sorrow and love, she gave consent to the trial of convent solitude; but, while thus yielding to her daughter, her angry feelings found vent in covering Father Munot with upbraidings.

"How could you advise Eugenia to such a wild scheme? How could you persuade her thus to throw herself away?" she indignantly exclaimed.

"I neither advised nor persuaded," he replied. "I merely consented to what she had proposed. Your words concerning a religious life are astonishing, coming from a good Catholic. You were so zealous about your niece that I cannot understand your present indignation."

"My niece and my daughter are two very different persons," said Mrs. Duval. "What would do for Elleanore would be utter folly for Eugenia. I would nearly as soon see my child in her coffin as wearing the black veil."

"Your daughter and your niece have chosen each for herself, and not as you desired. Your rash words may meet rebuke in seeing your

daughter in her coffin, for she evidently has not long to live," said Father Munot, severely.

To the convent went Eugenia—to the same convent that had received Elleanore. Here she heard from Sister Martha of Elleanore, that wicked girl, who would not turn from her obstinate heresy, and sold herself to the Evil One by running away from the convent. She heard, too, of Mignon—a shocking child, possessed from her birth by evil spirits, which even baptismal waters could not exorcise, and which possession must evidently have arisen from some secret Protestant tendencies in her mother. This Mignon had disappeared from the sacred enclosures of the convent walls, some thinking that she had run off to the outer world, there soon to find the destruction she courted; but others, of whom Sister Martha was one, thought Mignon had been spirited away by fiends, as a reward for her ill-doing in various insults she had put upon the image of Our Lady and the holy water. Eugenia heard and wondered. This nurseling of the

convent, Sister Martha, displayed an ignorance and fatuity that would have disgraced a child

Sister Ann frequently conversed with Eugenia, and before the young girl's gaze opened a heart like a whited sepulchre, full of dead men's bones, a chamber of unclean birds. Sister Ann, unconsciously revealing herself, stood before Eugenia's keen and searching mind, sanctimonious, strict, but a hypocrite.

There was Sister Mary, the porteress, too, grown gray in convent services; Eugenia marked her well, and saw a greedy, carping, jealous, intolerant old woman, a pest to herself and the scoff of all about her. Such gnarled and acrid fruit Eugenia had deemed might grow upon the world's wide tree, but that it was the harvest of this so-called religious life she had deemed impossible.

Rising from the porteress to the Mother Superior, Eugenia beheld one cold and hard, stern, unrelenting, knowing only her order, her Church, herself; one in whom true womanhood was dead.

Such as were the regular sisters of the order

were also the other inmates of the institution; the postulants were, some, weakly superstitious, some pharisaical, some ambitious, some characterless; the restraint of one class of sins seemed but to nourish others. The aim of the training of the pupils seemed to be rather quietly to make them unquestioning Catholics than thorough scholars.

In this crowd of short-comers Eugenia saw one who walked among them and was not of them—one who dwelt on some high plane of purity and piety above the rest, silent, gentle and sad—the Sister Agnes. Such as Agnes was Eugenia had imagined all would be, and Agnes for a time saved a religious life in Eugenia's estimation, from contempt.

And how fared it with Agnes? For her Ellenore had unlocked the truth. Dwelling on those high themes of which the youthful Protestant had conversed, Agnes had gone out of darkness into day. She yet frequently sought the chapel for hours of prayer; there she could be alone. There in the silence of that chapel dur-

ing this season of Lent that brought Eugenia to the convent, Agnes had gone to pray.

There was no mumbling of prayers she did not understand or feel, but, taught by the Spirit, who bloweth where he listeth, through Christ did Agnes draw nigh to God. The gaudy figure of the Madonna and the Child, the tapers, and the pictures, and all the trappings of Rome faded from Agnes' vision; by faith, with clearer sight than that of earth, she beheld her Lord: she saw him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write; she recognized her Burden-bearer. She saw him wounded for her transgression; she laid on him her weight of weariness and mourning and unrest, and he carried them away for ever. And now what should Agnes do? It was not for her vexed heart to answer. A hand more inexorable than conventual vows was upon her. Prostrated by the disease that had preyed upon her life so long, she was carried to a little couch in the infirmary. Her course was finished—she had lived long enough to be happy. On that hard and narrow bed she lay, drifting

hour by hour out of the troubled, tossing river of time into the calm ocean of eternal love. There, on that dying bed, Eugenia found her one morning when she had missed her for several days from among the sisterhood.

There was in Agnes' disease a fascination for Eugenia; it was the same that gnawed at her own heart. She obtained permission to wait upon the sick nun, and in the confidence that Agnes attracted, Eugenia told her all her trouble. How like it was to Agnes' own experience!—that horror of death, that sense of early doom, that fleeing to the convent. The gentle *religieuse* wept as she heard the tale. Then out of her dear-bought wisdom she instructed Eugenia that it was not in works, but in faith, not in the Church, but in Christ, not in vows and masses, but in God's free grace, that the soul's hunger and thirst are satisfied.

"It is not here," said Agnes, "that you will find peace to your soul. Year after year I sought the flying phantom of peace through these cells and corridors, but it was not until a

blessed Protestant girl, Elleanore Marvin, who was brought here by Him who makes the wrath of man to praise him, took me by the hand and led me away from the Virgin and the saints, and my works and the Church's promises, to God in Christ, that I felt ready to die—yes, anxious to go out of this life to him who loved me and died for me.”

“Elleanore Marvin,” cried Eugenia; “it is my own cousin! But teach me, Sister Agnes, if you have learned how to die.”

“It is too late, and I am too ignorant,” said Agnes, faintly, for already the dews of death were gathering on her pallid brow. “Go home and ask Elleanore; she will teach you.”

A few hours passed, and Sister Agnes was dead. With tolling bell and solemn masses they bore her to her burial; she was dead, but had just begun to live. From the living tomb that had hidden her so long she had gone up to the glad service and full life of God's sanctuary above.

Eugenia went home, shocked, the nuns said, by so near a view of death.

"Did you get the peace you sought at the convent, daughter?" asked Father Munot.

"I think the way to it is clearer," replied Eugenia, but said no more. Her silence disconcerted the priest; hers was a case beyond his knowledge, and he was quite willing to talk little to one who at times questioned him too closely.

Mrs. Duval received her daughter with open arms, yet was shocked at the alteration in her appearance. "The convent has ruined you," she cried.

"No, mother, this change in my looks would have come wherever I was," replied Eugenia. "I have come home to stay with you a little while, until the leaves fall perhaps; and now that I am here, mother, you must let me have my way."

"Yes, daughter," sobbed the subdued and heart-broken mother; "all you have to do is to express a wish and it shall be gratified."

"And here is little Violet at home too," said Eugenia.

Now Violet had been at a convent learning

music and embroidery, but after her altercation with Father Munot, Mrs. Duval had brought the child home.

"Yes," said Mrs. Duval, "your going to the convent frightened me, and I took her home for fear she might get an idea of being a nun."

"That is right, mother; never let her go again," said Eugenia.

The next day Eugenia said, "Now, mother, I am to have my own way, you know; and I want you to send for Cousin Elleanore."

"Elleanore Marvin!" cried Mrs. Duval.

"Yes; I want her," insisted Eugenia.

"But she will not come," said her mother.

"She must; I'll write to her that I am dying, and wish to see her."

"She can do you no good—only harm."

"Ah, mother, she knows the wonderful secret; she knows how to die. I *must* have her."

"What put this idea in your head?" asked Mrs. Duval. And then Eugenia told her Agnes' history.

"Well," said Mrs. Duval, when Eugenia had

ished the narration, "I have no doubt Sisteragnes was a very pious woman; but she had become weakened by ill health, and that accounts for her notions about Elleanore. It is utterly absurd to suppose an ignorant young heretic like our cousin could do any good to a devout Catholic."

"I see you don't understand it, mother," said Eugenia, "and I suppose there is no use in arguing the matter; but I must see Elleanore."

"That is a favor I cannot grant you," returned Mrs. Duval, decidedly: "it would bring us the contempt of all true Catholics and the anger of the Church. Besides, I feel that Elleanore has insulted and offended me beyond all forgiveness, and I never want to see her again."

On saying, Mrs. Duval left the room to avoid further entreaty. Eugenia sat a few moments in a listless, despairing way; then her face grew brighter; she rose from the sofa where she was reclining, and walked up and down the room. "I am feeble," she said, "but my weakness is more than half melancholy and despair. I will

rouse myself and gain strength and go and see Elleanore."

Eugenia did as she resolved. With new courage she took all the remedies ordered by her physician, gratified her mother by eating what was set before her, said she was getting stronger, and went out frequently to ride. Mrs. Duval suggested to Father Munot that it would be well to postpone his labors with Eugenia until she had regained her health.

That health was never to come to Eugenia, but the balmy air of spring helped her, and when she felt that she could endure the exertion and excitement, she went to Doctor Grant's.

Entering the parlor to meet her guest, Elleanore could hardly recognize in the wasted girl the once fair and joyous Eugenia.

"My cousin! Is it possible? Why, Eugenia, what has come over you?" she exclaimed, taking both her visitor's hands in hers, and gazing into her wan face with affectionate solicitude.

"The shadow of death," said Eugenia, in a choked voice, sinking back into her chair, and

sting her head back upon the cushion, while
tears rolled slowly from her closed eyes.

"Dear Eugenia, I should not so freely have
shown my feelings," said Elleanore, drawing a
chair to her side; "I did not know that you had
been ill. Indeed, it is nearly a year since I
heard anything about you. If I had known
that you were sick, I should have seen you."

"They did not want you at our house, so I
have been waiting to be able to come here. Do
you remember, Elleanore, how it was, the last time
we saw each other at my mother's, that you spoke
to me of death, and I laughed at the idea of
death coming, except at the beck of old age? I
don't feel so now, Elleanore. Death is very near.
For a good many weeks I have been thinking
of nothing else; and I have tried to learn from
the priest and from our books, and even in the
convent, how to die, but I have not found what
I sought."

"Poor Eugenia!" exclaimed Elleanore.

"Yes, poor enough. I feel as if standing on
a cliff, with Death ready to push me off into some

great black gulf. Elleanore, at the convent I saw a nun die happy; it was Sister Agnes."

"Dear Sister Agnes! Is she dead? Can you tell me how she died?"

"Just at the last we stood about her," said Eugenia; "and the priest had the holy oil for extreme unction, and the Superior had some amulets and charms in her hand, and the convent chaplain held a crucifix, and tried to clasp her hands about it. I stood by her head, and she raised her hands and waved all the amulets and crucifix and oil away, and looked at me and said, 'Jesus is all I want,' and then she died."

"Yes, Eugenia; Jesus is all one needs. If you have Jesus, death is no black gulf, but a bright door to heaven. Dear Agnes! how joyful it is to know that she trusted in Jesus and went to heaven!"

"You taught Sister Agnes, Elleanore, and you must teach me. I cannot come here very often—you do not know how weak I am—but you must teach me how to die happy. At home they tell me. You'll get well; you are not going to die

ather Munot says, 'You are all safe—only do this and do that.' Now, Elleanore, I know I am dying, and I am not right, and I cannot do anything. So what will become of me?"

"I too shall tell you to do something, Eugenia: buy a Bible and study it."

"A Bible! Why I don't think I ever read a page in one!"

"That is the very reason you do not know how one can die happy. The Bible lights up the blackness of that gulf you dread; the Bible shows you the firm hope as an 'anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast, that taketh hold of that which is within the veil.' You must get a Bible and read it."

"Can you tell me anything?"

"Not half as well as the Bible can. Come now; I will go with you and we will buy a Bible, and you must read it and pray over it."

"Praying won't do the least bit of good," said Eugenia, despairingly. "I've said, I dare say, a thousand prayers, all to no purpose."

"There is a difference, which the Bible will

teach you, between *saying* prayers and praying. You believe that there is a God able to destroy or to save you, do you not?"

"Certainly I do; I did not once, but now I do."

"Prayer offered through Jesus is his way for us to get blessings. You must just pour out earnestly your wishes and feelings to God, as you would to your nearest friend, or as you feel them. Do not wait to choose your words, but utter your desires as a child does to its father. Recognize the urgency of the case and go to praying, and God will teach you how to pray to him."

"I am willing to try *anything*," said the unhappy Eugenia. "Come, we will go and buy the Bible."

"And, Eugenia, come very soon again to see me. Rest assured that I will pray for you, that you may see the way of life."

"Yes, do," said Eugenia, passionately. "Pray for me now while I am alive, and it will do me good. Our Church leaves its praying until all the horror of death has been felt,

d the body and soul are alike past helping; when it begins to cry insanely for mercy for those who are past mercy!"

Home to her own room Eugenia carried the Bible she had bought; with locked doors she spent hours in reading it and in trying to pray. When she lay on the couch in the parlor, the Bible was hidden under her pillow and perused in stolen moments; and when Father Munot came in and sat talking to her, and took her patient silence for the becoming docility of a true child of the Church, Eugenia was in her heart pondering some passage she had read in the Word of God.

She went to see Elleanore once or twice, and Elleanore gave her a hymn-book, which thereafter lay beside the Bible in secret places, and was eagerly read by Eugenia.

When she had been for several weeks too feeble to go out of the house, or even to leave her room, she renewed her entreaties to have Elleanore sent for.

"I thought you had given all that up," said

her mother, who knew nothing of her intercourse with Elleanore.

"No, I had not; do let her come, if it be only once."

"Dear child, I do not want her here, perverting you or your sisters from the true faith."

"My sisters need not see her," said Eugenia.

"But I am displeased with her, and do not wish to meet her again."

"You need not see her."

"But Father Munot would be so angry."

"He need not know it. Oh, mother, let her come only this once; you cannot surely refuse my last request."

"Send for her, then, for once," said Mrs. Duval, unable to deny her dying child anything. "But I feel as if I was doing a foolish thing to suffer her to come."

The next day, as Elleanore was leaving her home for a walk, a note was put in her hand, wherein were the words, penned evidently by a trembling hand, "Elleanore, dear, come to see me only this once. I am very ill."

Holding the note in her hand, Elleanore walked slowly down the street, when she met her guardian, Mr. Manners. She told him of Eugenia's request, and showed him the note.

"You were kidnapped once on just another pretence," said Mr. Manners.

"I am not afraid that any such thing is intended now, and I really want to go see Eugenia," replied Elleanore, who had before told her guardian of her interviews with her cousin.

"Well," said Mr. Manners, "I have an hour I can spare. I will go there with you now; I'm not going to trust you alone to priestcraft; it led me a pretty wild goose chase after you for many a month. That famous beast, whereon the Romish woman sits, must have a big mouth if it can swallow me down; so now we'll venture within its reach in company."

Elleanore smiled, though filled with solemn and anxious thoughts about her dying cousin.

A servant opened the door for Elleanore and her friend, and requesting Elleanore to go at once to Miss Eugenia's room, she ushered Mr

Manners into the parlor, where, to their mutual astonishment and some embarrassment, he met Mrs. Duval.

"To what am I indebted for the honor of this visit?" said Mrs. Duval, who bitterly detested the lawyer. That gentleman, who returned with interest the lady's feelings, responded promptly, "To my ward, Miss Marvin, having been sent for to see your daughter. If you will excuse the remark, I did not think this a safe place for my ward to come unattended."

"Your ward's presence in my house was not considered desirable by any one but my daughter," said Mrs. Duval, spitefully; "but in consideration of my daughter's critical state of health, I could not deny her liberty to send for any one she chose."

"I regret exceedingly to learn of your daughter's illness, particularly since, with regard to my ward, she has shown a feeling and discernment so creditable to herself."

Mr Manners was now abandoned to the enjoyment of his own society, by Mrs. Duval, who

left the room with more dignity than amiability of manner.

Elleanore's call was a short one, but with a hopeful heart she bade Eugenia farewell, trusting that the sick girl's feet were now in the true Bible way, and that on the resurrection morning they should stand together on the right hand of the throne.

To Eugenia, on a summer midnight, came the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet him."

Her lamp had been lit but a little while, but it was burning with a faith-fed light, kindled not from the illusory fires of Rome, but from the steady flame of God's own truth.

"Mother," whispered Eugenia, as her weeping parent bent over her, "under my pillow is a book that has taught me how to die, and for me opened the doors of heaven. Keep it and read it, mother. I have marked it much with my pencil; do read it: it opened for me the way to heaven."

Father Munot had been sent for, and now en-

tered the room. Catching the last words, he said, "She speaks of our holy Church, which alone can open the door to heaven. You are happy, my daughter?" he added, advancing toward the bed.

"She has gone!" cried Mrs. Duval, flinging herself on the bed beside her lifeless child; "she has gone! Oh, Eugenia! my daughter, my idol, come back to me! why did you die?"

When the body had been removed from the couch, Mrs. Duval lifted the pillow where her child's head had rested and found there a Protestant Bible. She carried it to her own room and stood gazing on it in horror. It seemed as if an inevitable fate hung over the family; her sister-in-law, her mother, her child, all truants at heart from the Church of Rome! She dared not tell her priest; she could not destroy a book Eugenia loved and had made sacred by her touch. She hid it away with a heavy heart.

"Cousin Eugenia is dead," said Elleanore to Mrs. Reyburn, "and I do not doubt that she died a Christian."

“You cannot complain of your abduction and imprisonment,” replied Mrs. Reyburn, “when you see so plainly what the Lord has wrought by it. Who knows if by any other means your grandmother, Bridget, Agnes, Mignon and Eugenia had come into the light of God?”

My tale is ended. Behold what one earnest-hearted, devout Christian can do in bringing many souls unto glory! Behold, again, what the Church of Rome is, and answer me, Protestant parents, can you make your children pass through such fires? Shall Protestant parents send their children to Romanism for instruction? Shall the sheep ask the wolves to suckle the lambs? So poor a price do you set on the souls of your children, that while bonds and mortgages and government securities are to be zealously cared for, your children may go into any keeping? Shame on those of us who suffer Rome to reap her harvests from the fields of Protestantism?

Make your children Protestants. Let them

know what the word means. Show them the errors against which we protest. Bring them up in the purity and simplicity of the Reformed Churches. Regard the religious education of children as a matter of first importance, that they may grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

THE END.