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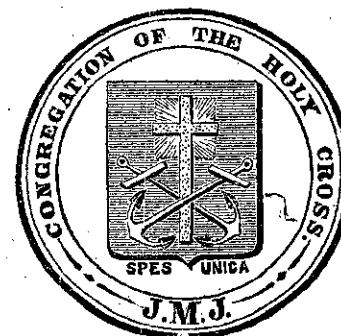
THE
OLD GRAY ROSARY.

“REFUGE OF SINNERS”

BY

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THE OLD GRAY ROSARY.

"Refuge of Sinners."

CHAPTER I.

"OFFERING UP."

It was noon of a November day, one of those days full of gray shadows, fitful gleams, and falling leaves, when the low chilly winds, sighing through the woodlands, have a sound as if they came from afar, laden with the lost voices of the past, and memories of dear faces long ago faded from sight in the distance of the other shore.

"There, Mamma! did you ever see such weather? I declare it is raining!" exclaimed Agnes Dare, a young girl of some sixteen summers, to her mother, who reclined upon a lounge near the fireside of a cheerful, pleasant room, whose arrangement and decorations indicated a highly refined and cultivated taste.

in its possessor : the charm of which was as potent as it was indefinable to all who were privileged to enter it. This apartment was the centre of interest in Mrs. Dare's house, for it was here that Mrs. Dare spent much of her time, suffering patiently, and bearing heroically, the passive quiet of an invalid's life : here the family delighted to gather when she was unable to join them in the drawing room, and here she received the few intimate friends who formed her small circle. The bright wood fire, the antique, highly-polished brass andirons glistening upon the marble hearth, filled the room with delicious warmth and brightness, while a cluster of rich autumnal roses and other fragrant blooms, which pious hands had that morning arranged upon Mrs. Dare's oratory, dispensed a subtle aroma around, reminding one of the sweet influence of the holy Maid of Nazareth, whose festival the Church that day celebrated. A mocking bird whistled and trilled his summer memories, half hidden in his capacious cage by the camelias, Egyptian lilies, and scentless geraniums which filled a southern bay-window with luxuriant foliage and rare blooms. Near the fire a soft white

cat, purring over four softer kittens which frisked around her, reposed in state upon a fleecy sheepskin, blinking her great green sleepy eyes at the sparks as they flashed up the broad chimney. All the gloom of that November day was without, notwithstanding which, the discord of Agnes Dare's discontent found utterance, disturbing the harmony within : "It is too bad !" she exclaimed. "Raining and blowing, and so damp and disagreeable. Pshaw !"

"What nonsense, Agnes !" said Mrs. Dare, laughing softly.

"It is *very* easy for you to say, '*what nonsense,*' Mamma, it is not *you* who are disappointed in a delightful game of croquet with your dearest friends. Why the lawn looks like a marsh already. I expected a splendid time to-day, I did so ;" she said petulantly.

"Hope for sunshine to-morrow, little one. What is that, that Sister Rose is always saying ?" Agnes laughed.

"Indeed, Mamma, it is too provoking though, and I am glad that Sister Rose is not here to tantalize me with her constant 'offer it up, deeree, offer it up.' Just as if our Lord

cared for such little things," answered Agnes.

"He does care for 'little things,' Agnes," replied Mrs. Dare gently.

"Now, Mamma! Do you suppose our Lord cares for such nonsense as a dead kitten? For the other day when I was storming and crying over my prettiest kitten torn to pieces by Thor—the old brute—in walked Sister Rose looking as placid as a May-morn, and without a word of sympathy, she patted me on my shoulder, and said: 'Offer it up, dearee, offer it up.'"

"And did you?"

"How ridiculous, Mamma! what, offer up the kitten?"

"Not the kitten, Agnes, but the trial. The pain you felt, on seeing your pretty kitling so cruelly hurt, combined with your emotions of anger and the desire to avenge her wrongs upon poor old shaggy Thor, who but obeyed an instinct of his dog-nature when he tormented her, altogether formed quite a trial, of which Sister Rose was only anxious that you should receive or win the merit, by offering it up. She knows well, that the best defence of the soul in all of its conflicts with nature, is in

'offering them up,' whatever they may be, great or small."

"Oh, but, Mamma, she is a Sister of Charity, and almost a saint you know," replied Agnes, with a pretty little petulant air.

"That is true," answered Mrs. Dare. "What day of the month is it, Agnes?"

"The 9th, Mamma. The feast of the Presentation, I declare. I was so full of my croquet party that I forgot all about it. I am so sorry," said Agnes Dare more seriously.

"What did our Blessed Lady 'offer up' in the Temple, when she presented her Divine Babe at the altar? Was it gold or gems, or frankincense, or crowns, or the kingdoms of the world? What was it, Agnes?"

"Two white doves, Mamma," replied Agnes, flushing up.

"Yes, two white doves, a small offering, such as the very poorest brought thither on the like occasions; but in this case, we must consider *who* brought them, and for *whom* they were 'offered up,'" said Mrs. Dare.

"I never thought of that before, Mamma," said Agnes, after a few moments' silence. "The Holy Virgin bought the doves, and they were

offered for her Divine Son Jesus. Jesus and Mary! and the great splendid Temple, and two poor little trembling doves, bought for a few pence! Well, Mamma, I am very wild and thoughtless, and fond of amusements, and like dearly to have my own way; but I shall not laugh at Sister Rose any more, no matter *what* she tells me to 'offer up.' I think I shall begin a little to offer things up of my own accord."

"It will lighten life's burden, child, and there is nothing like beginning with 'little things,' to ensure success in the effort to 'possess your soul in patience.' Do you remember the story of the man who laid a wager, that he could carry an ox upon his shoulders?"

"I should think that he was a goose, and lost his wager for his pains," said Agnes, laughing.

"Not so. He began with 'little things.' He bought—so the story goes—a young calf a few hours old and bore it home upon his shoulders, and every day until it reached ox-hood, he lifted it upon his back and carried it a certain distance, thus accustoming his

strength to its growing weight, until it was fully grown a veritable ox; and won his wager."

"You surely do not believe such a thing as that, Mamma?"

"Well," said Mrs. Dare, "however much one may doubt the story, it symbolizes remarkably well the wisdom of small beginnings."

While Agnes had been listening to, and conversing with her mother, she had unfastened a small sandal-wood casket, which stood upon Mrs. Dare's work table, and opened it. It was filled with curious Rosaries, which she lifted one after the other upon her finger, and thought there might be enough of them to supply a Convent.

"That it does, Mamma. I shall begin forthwith to lift *my* calf by resigning myself without another word to the bleak day—how the rain pours—and my disappointment. But dearest mother, where upon earth did you get all these Rosaries from?" Agnes always said "Mother," when very much in earnest, proving that the precious word is from the heart's own vocabulary.

"They are all souvenirs, darling," answered Mrs. Dare, looking with softened eyes upon the bright and truthful face of her child; "and strange to tell, all of them, except one—were brought to me from abroad by Protestant friends and relatives."

"How sweet in them to have thought of you in this way," said Agnes, as she held up against the bright fire light a glittering rosary of garnet and gold: "Who bought you this, mamma?"

CHAPTER II.

"JOB'S TEARS."

"That," said Mrs. Dare, while Agnes, still toying with the glittering rosary, watched with delight the red flashes of the garnet beads, "was brought to me years ago, by your cousin Delmar. When she, accompanied by her husband, went abroad for her health, they spent several weeks in Rome, and although

she was too staunch a Presbyterian to attend a reception at the vatican, she did not forget her Catholic friends at home, but brought many devotional souvenirs of this sort to them, which, through a friend who knew Cardinal Sforza, she got blessed by the Holy Father himself."

"The idea!" exclaimed Agnes, "of being in Rome, and declining an audience with the Pope. Well, Mamma, I should think he survived it. But look at this against the fire-light—did you ever see any thing glitter so? the stones look like beads of wine." Agnes laid the rosary back in its compartment, and lifted daintily, from the casket, one composed of Roman pearls and silver. "Oh, how exquisitely pure and beautiful! where may these be from?"

"From Rome, also. Captain Grandele brought me that when you were only a few days old, Agnes. It was blessed upon the tomb of the Apostles, by Pope Gregory XVI; and it was about your neck when you were baptized and dedicated to our Blessed Lady."

"How beautiful altogether!" said Agnes

"As a badge of HER, and a symbol of the innocence and purity of your soul, newly washed in the regenerating waters of baptism, it was indeed a beautiful and appropriate adornment," replied her mother.

"Ah, mamma! if every bead had only meant a virtue and a grace for your baby!" said Agnes, passing the lustrous white rosary slowly through her fingers.

"The fulfillment of that aspiration depends mainly upon yourself, my child. The prayers of faith, believe me, have never been wanting to that end," said Mrs. Dare, softly.

"It is very hard to be good, mamma!" said Agnes, with a sigh, as she lifted another rosary from the casket. Full of surprise at its richness, she exclaimed: "What stones are these? It is perfectly gorgeous! where did you get this, mamma?"

"Those are agates, the chain and setting of gold. It was brought to me by a gay and fashionable young friend who spent nearly two years traveling in the south of Europe with her father. It was blessed by the present saintly head of the church, Pope Pius IX. She brought me also a scrap of the coarse

serge vestment of Blessed John Berchmanns, which was given to her by Cardinal Barnabo. She could not understand the precious value of such a relic; it was to her only an old piece of black serge, and she actually laughed when she saw my delight on receiving it," said Mrs. Dare.

"It is perfectly splendid!" exclaimed Agnes, as she hung the rosary about her neck, indifferent to the relic of the Blessed Berchmanns: "see how lovely it looks! Do let me wear it, mamma; I will take the best care of it."

"I am sure of that, Agnes, but I do seriously object to such things being worn as ornaments. I keep them put away as sacred souvenirs of religion and friendship, but have never used them for devotional purposes, because they are too showy," said Mrs. Dare.

"I think I could pray all the better, if I had such lovely rosaries. I don't think it would distract me one bit," said Agnes, with a disconsolate air.

"It might distract others, though, to see the glitter and hear the jingle of such beads," answered Mrs. Dare; "then when attention

is attracted to them, might not you feel just a little vain-glorious at having them?"

"I might," said Agnes, honestly. "Indeed, I think that I should, but I'd like—trusting to Providence—to have them all the same, mamma. But, see here! here are rosaries, plain enough, and ugly enough, to suit the most fastidious penitent. Indeed, mother, I don't mean to be irreverent; why, Joseph Labre himself might have used them without the smallest compunction of conscience. *Where* did this come from? What curious little brown beads, strung upon a red silver cord, with a great crimson silk tassel at the end, and such an odd cross: why it looks like cork, set with bits of mother-of-pearl."

"I value that very highly. It was brought to me by your father's relative, Mr. Ravenal, who was a chaplain in the United States Navy. While the *Cycne* lay in one of the Mediterranean ports, waiting for the store-ship, *Shark*, a party of the officers, among them Mr. Ravenal, got leave of absence, with permission to go to Jerusalem. While there, Mr. Ravenal thought of us, and bought this rosary from a native Christian, who supported

himself by making articles of this sort and selling them to pilgrims. It was blessed upon the altar of the holy sepulchre; and attached to this rude and homely little cross, is an indulgence for the hour of death. It is a full rosary of one hundred and eighty beads."

"This is very interesting and devotional; but I'm afraid, mamma, that I should prefer either of the others—the garnet, the pearl, or the agate—I am not particular which," said Agnes, laughing. "But, here's another *curi*,—the beads look like sandal wood, and here's a quaint little pearl cross. What is its history?"

"That is also from the Holy Land. The beads are made of olive wood, cut from Gethsemane, and it was blessed upon the Altar of the Nativity, at Bethlehem. It was given to me several years ago, by Rev. Father Reynolds, who brought it himself from the Holy Land. I went, with a friend, to pay him a visit in the quaint old house, built many long years ago, by the Prince-Priest, de Gallitzin, who is worthily called the Apostle of the Alleghanies. Every thing remains as in Father Gallitzin's lifetime, only grown dark with

age, and made more holy by all the sacred memories and associations of the spot. He gave me, also, a little book of French hymns, from the old library, in which, to my great joy, I found the autograph of the holy man to whom it had belonged."

"Where is the Prince de Gallitzin's house, mamma?" inquired Agnes, forgetful at the moment of the rosaries.

"It is situated upon the broad Plateau of what is known as the 'Great Alleghany,' within a mile or two of Loretto Springs, in Pennsylvania, and included in the large tract of country which he—the Prince de Gallitzin, then a priest—purchased when it was all a dense wilderness."

"Who was he, mamma?" asked Agnes.

"He was a Russian prince, who, becoming convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion, sacrificed fortune, title, friends, and country, with all things worldly, for the love of Christ. While in exile in this country, he felt the priesthood to be his vocation; and while pursuing his theological studies, he was inspired by an earnest desire to carry the Gospel into the wilderness, which he afterwards did, lit-

erally; for his family, who received from the Emperor of Russia his confiscated estates, set him large sums of money, from time to time, which, after his ordination, he applied to the purchase of an immense tract of land lying between Newry and Ebensburg, then a primeval wilderness, where the Indian, from time to time, still pitched his wigwam, and where not more than five or six white families had settled, wide distances apart. He invited Catholic emigrants to his domain, and had the happiness, before his death, to see his colony numbering some thousands, and to see, literally, the desert blossoming like the rose, and the waste places made glad. I stood in the rude old wooden chapel, where he used to celebrate mass and preach the word to his people, and upon the spot, in the small room, where he fell asleep, resting from his labors, and received the exceeding great reward that he had so nobly won. He was known as 'Father Smith' during his lifetime. Only a few knew the secret of his illustrious birth—an insignificant thing when compared with his more illustrious life and death. But I forget myself,

my child. I fear that I have tired you with so long a narrative."

"No indeed, mother. There is something grand and heroic in such a life as that, and it sounds quite like what one reads of in history and in the lives of the saints. You know when sister Rose was ill, she made me read to her the life of St. Francis Borgia, who was a great and powerful Italian Duke, who sold all his goods and gave the price to the poor, and abandoned his rank, title and power, to become a poor Jesuit priest."

"And a great saint?" added Mrs. Dare.

"Yes," said Agnes, once more intent on the rosaries, "I believe he was. But, mamma, here is a rosary that beats every thing I ever saw in all my life for ugliness, rustiness and forlornity. Where in the world did you get it; and whom did it ever belong to; and what is it made of?"

"It is made," said Mrs. Dare, laughing, "of beans—beans commonly known as 'Job's Tears.' It is strung upon brass wire, and it belonged to an old slave of my father's. That old rusty, forlorn looking rosary, I have every reason to believe, has been the means of the

salvation of many. It was certainly the means of first bringing a knowledge of the true faith to some of my father's family, myself among the number."

"Mother! That old rosary?"

"Yes; this old gray rosary," said Mrs. Dare, holding out her hand for it, and pressing it to her lips.

"Job's Tears!" said Agnes, musingly.

CHAPTER III.

THE NARRATIVE.

"A suggestive name," said Mrs. Dare, smiling at the expression of her daughter's countenance: "most suggestive of tribulation, patience, and final victory."

"I should like to hear about it all," said Agnes Dare, gravely.

"I don't know that it would interest you, my child. These records of grave and sorrowful experiences have but slender interest for the young and gay. What I have to relate

has nothing of the eerie romance and glamour of the "Lay of the Brown Rosary*;" it is no ghostly fiction, but a true narrative of the struggles of a poor negro slave, with the infirmities of her nature and the sins of her life; who, disheartened by frequent failure, and the evil consequences of the great sin of her life, abandoned the sacraments of the church and everything connected with her religion, except devotion to the Blessed Mother of Jesus Christ."

"Oh! Mamma, indeed I am not so frivolous as you think me. I *do* feel interested in subjects of this sort, notwithstanding my nonsense, and I should very much like to hear more about this old gray rosary!" said Agnes Dare.

"Very well, darling, but don't expect either word-painting, heroics, love or marriage; there's nothing of all that in it. My dear mother wrote all the circumstances of poor Mary's life, years ago, and if you desire it very much, you shall read the manuscript."

Mrs. Dare opened her escritoir, and taking

* By Elizabeth Browning

out a small roll of manuscript, gave it to Agnes, who kissed her mother, and with a graceful "Thank you, dear mamma," ran away with it to her own room. She stirred the smouldering Cumberland coal, which emitted a cheerful blaze, threw back the curtain from the western window, curled herself up in a cushioned chair, and opened the papers.

While Agnes Dare is reading the contents of the manuscript, we will relate the events, traced long ago by a dear hand, now folded in the peaceful stillness of death.

In the old days past and gone, when slavery was the dark blot upon our national fame, there lived in a town not very remote from Washington, a gentleman named Cowden, whose liberal means enabled him to carry out practically, many of the impulses of a generous and benevolent heart. Mr. and Mrs. Cowden owned quite a number of slaves. Mrs. Cowden's people were the descendants of those who had served her forefathers through several generations, and came into her ownership, without a question of right or wrong, as a natural heritage, and who were wont to look back with no little pride to the period when our an-

fectionate cousins, the English, brought their ancestors from some "far place beyond the seas," and landed them "way down thar at St. Migoes." They lived happily and without care, being well treated, and identified themselves with the interests of the family in prosperity, in joy and in sorrow. But of these we have nothing much to say beyond the fact that they were all liberated and provided for many years before abolition set the world on fire. It is of the slaves who were purchased from time to time by Mr. Cowden, and particularly of one of that number, of whom we have something to say. Mr. Cowden and his family were Protestants, and although they were intellectual and cultivated people, well read and well informed on most subjects, they were as ignorant of the Catholic religion as if they had spent their lives somewhere near the source of the Nile. They had heard of such a thing, but it was as a myth to them, a pillar of cloud not only by day, but also by night. But they were full of human kindness, were true friends, kind neighbors, good citizens, and served God faithfully according to the light they had. Mr. Cowden had always felt

a deep interest in the misfortunes of the enslaved race, and did all that he could within the reach of his influence to ameliorate and improve their condition. This was well understood by the negroes for miles around, for they had, even in those days, a mysterious way of transmitting news in every direction, of interest to themselves. Mr. Cowden was not an agitator, such things were not in vogue in those comparatively primitive days; he was simply their friend, to whom they always came or sent in their difficulties, who never turned them away empty, or "gave them a stone when they asked for bread." Their appeals were never in vain, so that when now and then a spendthrift master was obliged to sell one, two, or three of his slaves to pay his debts; where an estate was settled and the property divided amongst the heirs, sundering parents and children, husbands and wives, or when (as was rarely the case) some brutal owner having driven, by cruel treatment, his slaves to desperation, gave them permission to seek new owners—the price of course coming to him—Mr. Cowden was their hope and refuge. Now, I will illustrate by one or two incidents,

which will bring me to old Mary, whose singular devotion to the Blessed Virg'n I have, with my own eyes, seen rewarded.

Mr. Cowden was one day seated at his dinner table with a number of invited guests, when a servant came in and whispered to him that a man wished to see him.

"It is impossible for me to see him now," said Mr. Cowden.

"He 'pears to be in great distress, sir," said the servant.

"Tell him if his business is urgent to come early to-morrow morning, that it is impossible for me to see him now," returned Mr. Cowden.

The servant went out and delivered the message, and Mr. Cowden resumed the conversation, which had been interrupted. Suddenly a scuffle was heard, the dining-room door was thrown violently open, and a tall, well-formed negro, with every appearance of the deepest distress upon his countenance, rushed into the room and threw himself at Mr. Cowden's feet, exclaiming: "Pardon me, Master, but I couldn't wait, sir. I'se to be sent to Georgy this evening, 'way from my

wife and children. Buy me, Master, buy me, for God's sake, sir."

"Why, John," said Mr. Cowden, much affected, for he knew the man; "this is a bad business. Why did you not come to me before?"

"I didn't know it, Master, didn't know it, sir, 'till the 'nigger buyer' 'rested me a half hour ago and told me I was to go souf with him. The papers wasn't quite signed, sir, and Master —, he couldn't help it, sir, he's deep in debt and the sheriff was threatening of him; he told me I had two hours to try and get somebody to buy me. For God's sake, Mar's Cowden, just think of my poor wife at home and the two little boys!" exclaimed John, while great tears were rolling over his dusky cheeks, and every nerve of his face was twitching with agony.

"Excuse me, gentlemen, for a short time," said Mr. Cowden, rising from the table. "Enjoy yourselves; I will rejoin you very soon. Come, John." Mr. Cowden led the way to his study, followed by John, who somehow felt as if a heavy burthen was about being lifted from his poor heart, for he well knew

that no one in the like circumstances had ever appealed to Mr. Cowden in vain. Mr. Cowden seated himself at his study table and drew pen, ink and paper towards him.

"What's the price, John?"

"One thousand dollars, sir."

Mr. Cowden wrote busily for several minutes, signed his name, folded, sealed and directed the letter and handed it to John.

"Take that to your master, John. I have offered thirteen hundred for you; but, look here, John, understand one thing before you go. I own, you know, some ten or fifteen men, bought under pretty much the same stress of circumstances as in your own case, but they knew when I bought them that there was a year of jubilee ahead for each. There's the same for you. I am conscientiously opposed to holding slaves; I look upon my people as being simply in bonds for a term of years; I expect them to serve me faithfully during an allotted term, at the expiration of which they go forth from my service *free*. I shall require six years' service, John, from you, if your master consents to let me have you. Now hurry off with you, and let me have an

answer as quickly as possible. I hope that you will serve me faithfully."

"So help me God, I will, master!" said the poor fellow, with a great sob of joy.

It was all he could say, and hurried off with the precious missive, and Mr. Cowden returned to his guests.

Of course John became the property of Mr. Cowden, to the great disgust and rage of the "nigger-buyer," who had expected to realize a profit of at least five hundred dollars on him, in the then distant slave marts of Georgia.

At the time I am writing about, the word abolitionist had never been heard in the land, yet in all the border States were thousands of men and women conscientiously opposed to slavery, who, some, while still living, and many by will, after death, freed their people unconditionally.

But we have no design of writing upon this vexed question farther than to say, knowing, as we do so well, the feeling of the people of the border States, that had the subject not been so fanatically and unwisely agitated by the philanthropists and politicians of the

North, they would have purged themselves of the reproach and tribulation of slavery long before it was abolished by fire and sword. But let us thank God that abolished it is, and look into the future for a better prosperity than we have yet known to arise from its ashes. Let not the nation have passed through the ordeal of Medea's cauldron in vain.

One evening, Mr. and Mrs. Cowden, with one of their children, were seated together near the windows of the back parlor, which, opening to the floor, revealed in the dusky twilight the rich clusters of flowering plants whose fragrance filled the room. They were enjoying each other's society, and the artless chattering of their little daughter, who was full of some childish plan for the following day. Suddenly a woman, with an infant in her arms, and holding a little boy by the hand, stood before them, quite close to the window.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" asked Mr. Cowden.

"I want you to buy me, Mar's, if you please," said the woman, hoarsely.

"I declare, Mr. Cowden," said his wife, in

an undertone, "you'll certainly be ruined if this goes on. Don't!"

"I believe I shall," he replied, in French, "but I shall have to answer to my God for my manner of dealing with these unfortunates who seem sent to me. Where are you from?" he asked the woman, who stood motionless before him.

"I belongs to Mr. Benson, up de country, yonder by de falls, but he beats me almost to def, sir, an' I won't stand it. He drew me off to-day, an' told me to go an' sell myself an' young un's, if I didn't he'd shoot me."

"Why does he beat you, and why does he wish to sell you?" asked Mr. Cowden.

"Well, you see, Mar's, I got a right hot temper, an' sometimes when I don't get enuff to eat—I might as well tell de troof—I gets to drinkin'—den Mar's he gets mad an' 'buses me, an' I sarces him peertly—den he flogs me. He's tired on it, an' I'm wuss tired, an' if somebody don't buy me, I'll frow myself an' dese two niggers in de 'Tomic river."

"You give a bad account of yourself," said Mr. Cowden.

"It's de troof, Mar's," she said, in a hope-

less tone. Just then her baby cried, and hushing it with a crooning sound, she fumbled among the rags that covered her bosom, and held it tenderly to her shriveled breast. This touched Mrs. Cowden's maternal emotions, and she arose hastily, saying:

"Go to that side-door there; I will open it and bring you in. You must rest and have something to eat."

"An' will you buy me, Mar's?" she persisted, without noticing Mrs. Cowden's kindness.

"My poor woman," replied Mr. Cowden, "I should be glad to help you, but, according to your own account, I fear that you'd give me and my family trouble, such as we have never known. In fact, I fear that you'd keep us in hot water all the time."

"Try me, Master, for God's sake, try me. I'll do my best. I wasn't always so, Master. Try me, oh! for God's sake, try me. I'll do my best!" she wailed, with a sudden outburst of entreaty, as if her all of hope in this life were crowded in what she said. Mr. Cowden, by one of those sudden impulses which seems

like obedience to the mandate of an unseen and superior power, replied:

"For the sake of trying to save you, body and soul, I will see what can be done; but if I find your case hopeless after I buy yourself and children, I shall be compelled to turn you adrift."

"May God and the Blessed Virgin——" she began.

"The who?" asked Mr. Cowden, amazed. "The Blessed who?"

"I means de Mother of Jesus, sir," she said, in a low voice. "I'm drefful bad, Mar's, but she be mighty good to me, an' I was gwine to ax her to get her Son to repay you for befriending such a poor, misable limb o' Satan as I be."

"I suppose you are what is called a Roman Catholic?" asked Mr. Cowden.

"I is, sir, by baptism. I done told you, Mar's, what a sinner I is——"

"Very well, very well. Go to Mrs. Cowden, and get something to eat. Tell her what sort of work you can do, and to-morrow I will see your master and make the necessary arrangements to buy you for at least a term

of years," said Mr. Cowden, now inspired with the hope of converting this woman from the errors of a creed which he imagined benighted the soul with a worse than Egyptian darkness.

"Come here, Mr. Cowden," said his wife, as he was passing through the dining-room to his study. Two wax candles were now lit upon the tea-table, and their light shone down upon the miserable creature, who crouched upon the floor at Mrs. Cowden's feet, revealing a sight that sickened him. Her face was covered with welts and bruises, her features were swollen and bloody, and her ragged garments were stained here and there with blood.

"Make her comfortable, my dear, make her comfortable," he said, hurrying out, more than ever determined to endeavor to have her taught what he considered "Gospel truth." He worshiped God as the supreme Being and Creator of all, and believed in the redemption of man, beyond which the thread of faith was tangled and lost in the wilderness of doubt around him.

CHAPTER IV.

"CO'S YOU KNOW, MISSIS, SHE'S DE REFUGE
OF SINNERS."

"Make her comfortable, wife," said Mr. Cowden, hurrying out to escape the painful spectacle; "make her as comfortable as you can."

Poor Mary was soon made comfortable. Mrs. Cowden gave her and her little ones a plentiful repast, which they ate greedily, having been without food all day, after which she conducted them to a vacant room over the kitchen, and, assisted by her maid, soon cleansed the unfortunate creature's bruised body from head to foot, then dressed her in soft, clean clothing, while another—the nurse of the family—bathed and put clean garments upon the forlorn little ones.

We will not repeat the sad story of Mary's sins and sorrows up to this period in detail; it is enough to know that they were many

and stormy. One light had risen upon the darkness, one sweet leaf of balm had been cast upon the bitter waters of her destiny. Her old mistress, the mistress of her childhood, was a pious and fervent Catholic, who had all her slaves baptized and reared in the one true faith, with the same conscientious care that was bestowed upon her own children. But the "old Missis" died soon after Mary reached womanhood, and when the estate was divided, she fell to the lot of the eldest son of the family, a man full of generous feeling, but possessed of all those exaggerated ideas of the superiority of race and the immaculate prerogatives of caste, which he imagined released him, by their adventitious pretensions, from all moral and religious responsibilities, whenever he found it convenient to ignore them in the pursuit or indulgence of his evil passions; errors not so much to be wondered at in one who had long ago abandoned the practice of his religion, and coward-like, became ashamed even of his baptismal birth-right. Having thus, by his own free will, become an outcast from this "higher law," he gave himself up to the in-

dulgence of those vices of which the human law takes no cognizance. He drank to excess, and when maddened with the fumes of poisonous liquors, he inflicted the most brutal treatment upon his slaves. These were his "goods and chattels," according to law, and except the outspoken indignation of his neighbors, who were, like himself, slave-owners, there was no person to restrain him or to defend them. Nor did they fare much better when his drunken frenzies wore off, for they left him morose and irritable, with intelligence enough to pursue a more deliberate system of ill-treatment towards his oppressed people. Degraded by ill-treatment, Mary, in the mistaken idea that it would drown her sorrows, followed her master's example, and began to drink. Her two little children—for she was now a wife and mother—once a source of happiness to her; the grief and reproofs of her good and honest husband, who was the slave of a neighboring planter; the recollection of all the religious instructions she had received under the care of her pious mistress, were without effect in restraining her downward course. She was in the habit

of saying: "If master got crazy with liquor, so would she; she'd be even with him; if he 'bused her, she'd 'buse him; if he mauled her, she'd maul him." And she kept her word—kept it so faithfully that her master, either from a cowardly fear that she would kill him, or that he would kill her in some of their crazy-drunk fits, ordered her to quit the plantation and find another owner. This was after he had given her an unlucky blow in one of their fierce struggles, which had left her apparently dead for hours.

Sobered and terrified in view of the consequences which would ensue if she died, his relief was inexpressible when she gave signs of returning consciousness; and as soon as she recovered sufficiently to leave her bed, he drove her and her little ones out on the highway, with the choice of finding some one to buy them within a week, or of being sold to a Georgia "nigger buyer." The time had almost expired, and her search for a new master had, up to the very last day, been fruitless, when despairing and almost famished, some stranger who, touched by her wretched appearance, stopped to offer her relief, and

after hearing her miserable story, told her of Mr. Cowden.

We have seen how she was received by these true philanthropists, who, having heard much more in detail from herself of the events of her life than we have related, purchased herself, her husband and children, paying a full price for them, but holding them only as bondsmen for a term of years.

"Can you sew, Mary?" inquired Mrs. Cowden, a few days after Mary and her family were settled in their new quarters.

"Yes, Missis, coarse sewing."

"Can you cut out?"

"Nigger's clothes, Missis; I been used to that."

"I am glad to hear that, Mary, for I am sure that you can be of much assistance to me. This room, which I am glad to see kept so tidy, belongs to you and your family. I shall expect you to cut out and make the men's working clothes, keep your children well clad and clean, and your quarters, as I see them now. Your master gave my husband a bad account of you, Mary; but not much worse than you honestly gave of your-

self; but let the past go. I trust, with God's help, you will begin to lead a new life," said Mrs. Cowden, gently.

"I'm gwine to try, Missis, with the help of God and the Blessed Virgin. I've been mighty bad, I know, and what makes it wus is that I know'd better all the time. My old Missis, she gave us all a chance to be good; she took great pains with her niggers, she had 'em christened as soon as they were born, and 'structed by a priest as soon as they were big enough; and she was good to us, *good* to us, was missis, but she went and died, and we was scattered 'mongst the heirs, and I fell to the lot of the wust one of the lot, and 'fore God—"

"Try and forget those miserable times, Mary," said Mrs. Cowden, as she saw Mary's blood-shot eyes gleaming with savage fire at the thought of her cruel master; "God has been very good to you in casting your lives in a better place, and the best way you can show your gratitude to him is by striving to forgive, while you try to win his favor humbly and truly."

"That 'ar is all gospel truth, Missis; I don't deny it, and I looks to the Blessed Virgin to help

me, 'cos you know, Missis, that she is the 'Refuge of sinners.' And I'm a great sinner to be brung up as I was," replied Mary, with simple pathos, while she nodded her gaily turbaned head emphatically.

"Poor, benighted soul," thought Mrs. Cowden, after she had reached her room, "we must do all that we can to win her from her errors. Her idolatrous religion has done but little for her so far, we must teach her a better and simpler way."

And Mary that night in her simple prayers—perhaps the only prayers she uttered, said: "Please hear me, my Missis in Heaven, the Mother of Jesus; and for the love of your Son hangin' upon the cross-tree, convert these good people, Massa and Missis, to the true Catholic Faith. Never mind me, sweet Missis, for I'se a great sinner, but turn your blessed eyes upon them that lifted me out of the mire, and out of hell. That's it," she muttered, rising up from her knees, "lifted me out of hell, for if Massa Cowden hadn't bought me, I was gwine to fling myself and them 'ar young ones into the 'Tamac river, the Lor' have mercy on my soul."

Mary was very happy in her new home, where peace and plenty reigned, and humane treatment crowned her days with contentment and her nights with rest. With her husband and children about her, and no heavy, unwomanly toils to wear down her strength, with the privilege of going to church once on Sundays, and with a restful feeling brooding in her soul so lately tossed and perturbed by evil passions, and a partial return to the counsels of her "good ole Misses dead an' gone," it is strange that old sins should ever have disturbed her again; but alas for weak human nature! ever stumbling and falling into the thorns and mire; Mary was no exception to the rule, as we will show. But we are anticipating. Mr. and Mrs. Cowden pitying her for what they considered her spiritual blindness, endeavored to influence her to attend the Methodist meeting house, but upon this point she was firm, and in her peculiar lingo declared that she was determined not "to run after strange gods."

"You know, Master," she said, "I'm a great sinner, I don't pretend to be nothing else, but that 'ar sort don't suit me. You and Missis

is mighty good, but I don't think it are that religion that make you so, and I'm mighty bad, but *my* religion don't make *me* so, neither. I was christened and brung up a Catholic; if I can't be that I'd rather be nothing. I don't mean no offence, Master, but that's what I feel to say." And in some such manner she answered whenever she was advised to go to "meeting." Occasionally she went to Mass or Vespers at the quaint old church on the hill, and one pleasant Sunday in October asked Mrs. Cowden's permission to take little Janet, Mrs. Cowden's only daughter, to Vespers, with her. The child, with all the eager curiosity of her sex, was wild to go to "Aunt Mary's church," and her mother, who rarely denied her anything, consented.

"Oh! thank you, mamma. Did you know that there were beautiful pictures and music and lights to be seen there, mamma, and that the minister dresses in lace and silk and gold? Oh! I'm so glad to think I shall see it all," cried Janet, as she put on her little pelisse and chinchilla hat, her heart and imagination filled with a medley of those things in which her æsthetic nature took such keen delight. She

had never been inside a Catholic Church before, and when the altar, blazing with many lights, and filled with rich-hued flowers, all dimly seen through clouds of incense, arrested her sight; when the sweet, solemn tones of the organ floated out in mysterious music above her head; when she saw behind the altar a picture of the ascending Saviour, surrounded by rays and clouds of splendor; when she saw the priest bowing reverently in his glittering robes, worn in honor of the King and High Priest he served, the child shrunk close beside the slave, and clung to her arm, awed beyond anything she had ever experienced before, but feeling in her heart a delicious rapture as new as it was strange. "This," she thought "must be like heaven." After a while she looked up to see what "Aunt Mary" was doing amidst all this splendor. She was doing nothing but kneeling, and, like herself, gazing at the solemn spectacle; yes, she *was* doing something with a string of old gray beads which she slipped one by one, through her fingers, while her thick, African lips moved as if she were praying. This was the way Janet Cowden told her mother all about it that evening:

"And mamma," she added, "although every thing was so rich and so lovely, there was something else that I can see whenever I shut my eyes. They were painted upon the gallery on each side, just over the place where the minister was."

"What was it, darling?"

"Pictures, mamma. There was a book in one, with seven seals, and open; the back of a book was a lamb bound. Then there was a light all around, and gold clouds with beautiful little faces peeping through. In the other was a lamb with a cross upon his back, and something that looked like a little flag; there was a golden light all around him, and lovely faces in the clouds. Oh, mamma, I don't know what it means, but I shall never, never forget it while I live."

And she never did.

CHAPTER V.

"SHE WAS A HUMAN."

One of Mrs. Cowden's servants—the cook—fell into ill health, and her mistress, in view of her long and faithful services, gave her her freedom unconditionally, and established her in a small and comfortable house, with one of her grown up daughters to take care of her, and assist her in tending a small miscellaneous shop in which Mr. Cowden had invested for her some thirty dollars. Until something better could be done, Mary was put into the kitchen, and proved to be a much superior cook to her predecessor. She strained every nerve to please her master and mistress, and never had their table been so well provided with deliciously cooked food, and they determined to give her permanently the situation of cook. This was an interruption to Mary's somewhat independent mode of life, which she did not relish, although she acquiesced in it, yet she

brooded and thought over it, until she began to feel herself quite injured and her hot African blood fermented to fever heat. Morose and silent, she gave short, sharp answers to all around her, and when Mrs. Cowden, in the gentlest way, reproved her, her compunction and rage together worked her up to such a frenzy that in an evil moment she sought to assuage it by indulging in some of those fiery draughts which used to madden her, and which she got when she went to the store-room that night for flour for the next morning's breakfast. The night happily concealed her fault, but her appetite was whetted anew for more, and although she knew that Mr. Cowden expected several distinguished gentlemen to dine with him that day, she drank secretly, draught after draught, until by the time dinner was cooked, she scarcely knew what she was doing. Never had such a dinner appeared on Mr. Cowden's hospitable table. Some of the viands were scorched almost to crispness; some were nearly raw; the soup was like brine, the entrees were blackened mysteries, which would have set Soyer mad. To crown all, one of the servants brought from the china closet a pile

of French china dinner plates, and gave them into Mary's hands to wipe before they were sent into the dining-room. With a growl of drunken rage she dashed them upon the brick floor of the kitchen with all her might, and broke them into a thousand pieces. Mrs. Cowden had just entered the kitchen. She turned very pale, and there was a gleam of fiery anger in her eyes, but controlling herself, she said: "James, go round for Sophy Lee (her old cook) and ask her to come here immediately, if she is able. Mary go instantly to your room." She flounced out, and up stairs, where she seized her children, and after beating them, she threw herself upon the floor in a dead, drunken sleep.

Mary awoke in the morning to soberness and to shame. She crept out of bed, where her husband had sorrowfully laid her, washed herself, put on a clean, homespun suit, and her large linen apron so quietly, that neither husband or children awoke, and slipped down stairs to make the kitchen fire. It was scarcely dawn and not a soul was stirring in the house. She lit the fire, and looked around her. In the usually clean and neatly arrang-

ed kitchen, everything was out of place, and in the direst confusion. The dinner party had occupied the servants so late that by the time their own work was finished they were too weary and sleepy to do her's. There lay piles of unwashed dishes, pans of greasy water, remnants of broken victuals, bones, vegetables, in short, the debris of a feast, while chairs, tables and cooking utensils were strewed around in indescribable disorder. In one corner glittered a heap of broken china. Scraps of rich gilding, fragments of rare colors, shone out in the red firelight. Mary saw it, and her swarthy cheek glowed, her heart swelled, and a great compunction and shame overcame her, and she burst into tears.

"My doin's, my doin's," she muttered, covering her face with her apron, "I ain't fit to live—nuther to die. Oh! please, my good Missis Mary, pity me this one time more; I'll try again; with the help of your 'sistance I'll try. They's been mity good to me, all of 'em, and me to go and do this. Oh, Lord, Lord! hear your blessed mother's prayers for this poor sinner that she may learn to walk in the narrer way. Oh! you nigger, you bad,

or grateful nigger, if the Blessed Missis don't pity you, the devil is sure and sartin to burn you forever and forever," she exclaimed, beating her breast and wailing piteously.

When Mrs. Cowden awoke that morning, her temples were throbbing, her limbs aching, and worse than all, her heart sank wearily, not only at the prospect of the physical fatigues before her, but at the moral cares and disquietudes to be contended with. But she must arise. Some one must begin to plan order out of disorder, and dispose of the wrecks strewn around her household altars. Her servants were all willing to work, but there was only one head to devise, and that was the head then throbbing and aching upon her weary shoulders. Mr. Cowden had risen and gone out for his usual morning walk, and with sad forebodings as to the sort of breakfast that he would find upon his return, she walked wearily down towards the kitchen without meeting any of the servants who were engaged in other parts of the house.

She looked at the clock as she passed through the dining room, where everything was in its usual elegant order, and saw it

was twenty minutes of breakfast time. A great throb of pain almost blinded her, but she passed on to the kitchen, and with trembling hand, opened the door. Was what she saw a dream? Everything clean, shining and burnished; tables and chairs, white and in place; every shelf in order; every pot and pan in its nook; a bright fire, a delicious breakfast, and Mary standing, with downcast eyes, clean and tidy, and under a pretense of examining her rolls, shunning Mrs. Cowden's eyes.

"Oh! how very nice," exclaimed Mrs. Cowden, infinitely relieved; "is breakfast ready, Mary?"

"Yes, Missis," she replied humbly. "Is Master come, ma'am?"

"He will be here presently. This is a great relief to me, Mary, to find you at your post, and all going on so well with you this morning."

"Forgive me, Missis, I'm mighty wicked. I told you so. I'll try to do better. Only I 'spects to fall again. I'm afeard on it. But I'll try."

"That is all, my poor friend, that the best of us can do. I will try to help you by being

patient, and we must try and ask God's assistance," said Mrs. Cowden, with a much lightened heart.

Mr. Cowden, still smarting under the mortification of the day before, had but small faith in Mary's promise of amendment. He had, during his walk made up his mind to send her and her family to a farm he owned in Prince George's County, but Mrs. Cowden wished to try her a little longer. As a cook, she could not supply her place; then she was kind to the children, obliging to the servants, and never spent an idle moment.

"Well, my dear, do as you please, I hope she won't break another hundred dollars' worth of china," he replied.

"I hope not, indeed. We must guard against that when the spell is upon her. Do you know that Janet has taken such a fancy to her that I can scarcely keep her away from her, and she appears equally fond of the child. Oh, if we can only cure her of this vice—"

"Well, well, my dear, I wish you success in your home mission. Break her of this miserable habit, then cure her of her idolatrous

religious notions," said Mr. Cowden, leaving the room.

Things went on smoothly for some time. Mary became reconciled to her position in the kitchen, and was consequently cheerful. Her husband and children were happy, and her humane employers enjoyed not only her delicious cookery, and the comfort arising from regularly served meals and a well-ordered kitchen, but had the hope that Mary would not only abandon the vice of her life, but become a good Protestant.

One evening Mrs. Cowden went into the kitchen to give an order for breakfast; Mary was sitting beside the clean hearth upon which burned a cheerful fire, for this was before the days of cooking stoves. There was no other light in the room. Her eyes were closed, and she was apparently dozing. Everything shone with cleanliness. The bright fire-light danced over glittering rows of tins, and the gay-colored kitchen china; order, neatness and comfort prevailed. Even the big Angora cat, curled up at Mary's feet, asleep, looked as white and silky as if she had been bathed in milk, and dried on fine linen. Mrs. Cowden

paused on the threshold, while she cast a glance of content and admiration around her; in fact it was a scene to delight not only the eye of a thoroughly good housewife, but of a Flemish painter.

Mary lifted her head and opened her eyes.

"Ah! Mary, I am sorry to disturb your nap," said Mrs. Cowden; "I was admiring your nice kitchen."

"I wan't asleep, Missis, thank you, marm."

"I hope that you were having pleasant thoughts, Mary. You deserve them while resting from labors so well done."

"Ah! Missis, my thoughts is mightily mixed up; some sweet, some bitter," she replied, as she slipped a string of something that rattled and jingled into her pocket.

"What is that, Mary, a necklace?" asked Mrs. Cowden, thinking that it was some of those cheap trinkets which the plantation negroes were so fond of.

"No, marm. It's my beads—my prayer beads," said Mary, drawing out a rosary made of a sort of gray bean, vulgarly called "Job's tears," strung upon plated wire.

"Prayer beads! I never heard of such a

thing in my life," said Mrs. Cowden, taking the rosary in her hand. "What upon earth do they mean? Do *you* understand them, Mary?"

"Yes, Missis, it is one of the things my ole Missis was mighty perticular in 'struction of us in," replied Mary.

"But *how* do you pray upon beads? it seems like trifling to me."

"It be plain to me, Missis, but I'm feared I can't make it plain to you, marm."

"Try, Mary, for upon my word I never heard of such a thing in all my life," said Mrs. Cowden, passing the rosary through her fingers and looking with serious eyes upon the little brass crucifix suspended from it."

"Well, Missis, you see here's the crucifix first of all, to mind us, I s'pose, that Jesus ought to be first and fo'most in our thoughts, because He died for our sins. Then comes the Creed, Missus, the 'Postles' Creed; I s'pose you know that; (no, Mrs. Cowden did not 'know that') this bead stands for *it*; this one for the Lord's Prayer; these three is Hail Mary's; this one for Glory be to the Father and the Son and to the Holy Ghost; ther

here's another 'Our Father;' then ten Hail Mary's; then one Our Father, and so to the end."

"But, Mary, why not go direct to God; why pray to the Virgin Mary at all?"

"I'll tell you, Missis, I prays to her for her 'sistance, 'case I's a dreadful sinner, and 'case she was a human* olce herself, and knows how to feel for me. God is mighty holy, Missis; He makes me afraid, and I'm glad to have suffin to stand 'twixt her Son and me."

"Ah, my poor Mary, Jesus Christ is our only help with God the Father," said Mrs. Cowden, kindly and reverently.

"Yes, Missis, so I was larn't, but He's to be my Judge in the great day, and it's a good thing, honey, to have His Mother to plead for us as she sets at His right hand, for she was a human, and she knows the good-for-nothingness of such sinners as I be."

* This was her way of expressing "human being."

CHAPTER VI

HOW MRS. COWDEN WAS PUZZLED

"What do you mean, Mary, by Apostles' Creed?" inquired Mrs. Cowden. "Is it a prayer?"

Mary uttered a low chuckle—not disrespectfully, but it was too much for her that this well-born, rich, educated, and beautiful white lady did not know the Apostles' Creed, a thing that all "ole Missis' little niggers could say by heart before they were knee high. Well! well! well!" These were her thoughts, but she said:

"It are not a prayer, I believe, Missis, it's what we b'lieves."

"Can you say it, Mary?"

Mary repeated it.

"Very well, and very good," thought Mrs.

Cowden. "There's nothing about worshipping idols in that. Now, Mary, tell me what you mean by your 'Hail Mary?'" "Here," thought Mrs. Cowden, "the cloven foot will manifest itself." "Is Hail Mary *all* that you can say?" she asked.

"No, Missis, there's more of it."

"Will you repeat it, Mary, if you please?"

"Sartain, Missis."

Mary repeated the "Hail Mary."

It suddenly occurred to Mrs. Cowden—for just at that moment a shriek from one of Mary's children compelled her to run up to her room to see what was the matter—that it was not a good work that she had set out for herself, this endeavor to disturb the faith of an ignorant slave. What if she succeeded, and that soul in new and strange lines, should become shipwrecked? Suppose this creed of which *she* was herself so ignorant, should have more of truth in it than she dreamed of? What was there wrong in the prayers of the beads? There was the Apostles' Creed. What was that? A declaration of the faith of all Christians. *She* believed every article of that. There was the Lord's Prayer. What was that? The

prayer taught by Jesus Christ Himself; the Prayer of prayers. Then the Doxology. What was that? A declaration of faith in the most Holy Trinity. But there was the Hail Mary. That puzzled her. She knew nothing about it; and she thought she had never heard it, and imagined it to be some idolatrous popish nonsense or other, to impose upon the ignorant, such as poor Mary. Just then Mary, having pacified her child and hushed it to sleep, returned. She uncovered her yeast and took down her bread-trencher and said:

"Missis, does you want biscuits or rolls for breakfast?"

"I wish just now to hear your 'Hail Mary,'" replied Mrs. Cowden, smiling, and feeling as if she was about to spring a mine under this poor papist's faith. Mary repeated the "Hail Mary" slowly, reverently and distinctly. Ah! there was much for her in that blessed Mother's prayers. She knew the sorrows of human kind, for she too was earth-born, and had tasted the bitterest cup of all. Mrs. Cowden heard each word, and strangely familiar did they sound. It was all in her Bible, which she read daily. The first chapter of St. Luke's

Gospel was one over which she had been wont to linger—all her reverence for God, all her strong faith in the divinity of the Son of Mary, all her deep thankfulness for the coming of the Redeemer, blended with her own maternal instincts in sweet sympathy for the gentle Virgin Mother bending above the humble crib of Bethlehem. How often had she pondered over it; how often had her eyes filled with tears while thinking on the poverty and humiliations of the most august MOTHER and SON the earth ever knew! And the Angel appeared unto Mary and said:

"Hail! full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women."

That was all in her Bible; not only that, but the salutation of Elizabeth to the holy Virgin when she went up to the hilly country to visit her kinswoman:

"Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."

Not only that but much else of what passed between the Angel and Mary, and Mary and Elizabeth. The papists certainly had Scripture for that much, but she never met with the last part in any portion of the New Testa-

ment. Holy Mary, Mother of God! But had not God found her "full of grace?" hence she was holy; He had made her the Mother of His Son because she was holy. Mother of God! Yes, she understood that. It was in her Bible, but what she could not comprehend was the prayer, which in the fervor of her love for Jesus Christ, the Church, His spouse, added for the help of her children who "struggle and weep in this valley of tears:" "Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death." *That* seemed idolatrous to her. She forgot how often she said to her old pensioner, Mrs. Meade, "Pray for me, be sure you pray for me," or whenever an old preacher, held in great repute by the Methodists, came to see them, she was in the habit of saying:

"Pray for me, Father Greentree."

But by one of those mysterious freaks of thought, or rather, laws, which brings things coherently together, which have a relative attraction, she thought of it now. Was *she* guilty of idolatry. Did she do that which deprived God or his Son of their glory by asking human beings like herself to pray for her? And yet, because this woman before her, in

the humility of her low estate, ever stumbling, halting and falling, veiled her face from the eyes of an offended God, and besought her upon whom His almighty favor had rested; who had guarded his infancy, brooded with wonder and adoration over His silence, and gazed with ineffable awe and tenderness upon His miracles; who had suffered in her soul all that He suffered on the rugged wood of Calvary, to "pray for her a sinner, now, and at the hour of her death," she had judged her idolatrous. Mrs. Cowden had sat down beside the kitchen fire, her chin leaning upon her hand, her eyes fixed in thought, upon the glowing flames. She had never thought of the Blessed Virgin in that way in all her life before, any more than she had thought of Sarah, of Deborah, or Miriam, or Judith, or Esther, or Anna, nor in fact as much, because in their lives there was a grandeur, and surrounding them a nimbus lit up with a glory from the lightnings of Sinai; but Mary, who was she?

"A simple Hebrew maiden, poor and humble, who embroidered and waited in the Temple, but who had done nothing remarkable for her people; it is true that she was the mother

of Jesus—" Here Mrs. Cowden stopped. A crowd of thoughts like a huge billow, swept through her mind, undefined, strange and mysterious, yet all blending together in these words: "Mother of Jesus." Nazareth was there; Bethlehem was there; Egypt was there; the streets of Jerusalem, the hill of Mount Sion, the Sea of Galilee, Mount Thabor, the shouts of a multitude casting their garments and hailing their king; Mount Olivet was there; Gethsemane; the rabble athirst for the blood of the Son of Mary; the hall of judgment; the Cross and Calvary; amidst it all was the Mother of Jesus. We know how mysteriously swift is thought, swifter than light, or the swiftest wind, ubiquitous, seeing from afar wondrous things of the past, and dimly outlining the shadowy mists of the future; so it was at this moment with this Protestant lady; amidst incongruous surroundings, and prompted by the simple unpremeditated words of a Catholic slave, there came into her soul a new light, showing her glimpses of a truth of which she had never dreamed before. She roused herself from her strange reverie, told Mary what to make for breakfast, hurriedly

bade her good-night, and returned to the drawing-room in a more than usually thoughtful mood.

CHAPTER VII.

"SHE PRAYS BECAUSE SHE IS A SINNER."

"Have you heard how the Mayor's sister is?" asked Mrs. Cowden of her husband one day in the course of conversation.

"She is no better. I was at his office yesterday to see about getting that alley closed; and inquired after her health. It is a most remarkable case."

"I hear that she has been bed-ridden many years, and is a great sufferer," said Mrs. Cowden.

"Yes, the Mayor told me that her present attack is supposed to be mortal; it seems impossible for her to survive it. Her back is covered with ulcers, and she is so feeble that when her bed is made, four persons have to lift her in the sheet, holding her up by its four

corners, until it is shaken and smoothened. She is perfectly helpless.

"Her case excites much sympathy; such a lingering, helpless sort of sickness is one of the things I most shrink from. I heard a lady say yesterday that she eats little or nothing and is perfectly emaciated. The skill of the most eminent physicians in Washington is baffled, and they regard her case as one of those phenomena in medicine, which defies all diagnosis; and they simply call it a 'complication of diseases,'" replied Mrs. Cowden.

"It is very sad," observed Mr. Cowden, "but the saddest part of it, wife, is the fact that they are Roman Catholics, and consequently without that vital religion which sanctifies all trials."

"We should not judge them to be without that, because they are Catholics," said Mrs. Cowden, quickly.

"Well, I should not, and I know it sounds uncharitable, but for something the Mayor told me. He said that there was no earthly hopes of his sister's recovery, and they had

written to some German Prince,* who is accounted a worker of miracles, and were going to have some sort of religious ceremony conducted by their priest and certain friends for her cure, as soon as they hear from him. I felt a curiosity to hear more about it, but through delicacy, asked no more questions. It made me sad, however, for error and superstition in high places do incalculable mischief by the conspicuous example they afford."

Mrs. Cowden made no reply, but seemed to be absorbed in turning the heel of a fine woolen sock she was knitting, and Mr. Cowden resumed his newspaper. Everything was quite silent. The fire crackled merrily on the hearth, while, like swarms of golden bees, the sparks flew up the wide-mouthed old-fashioned chimney; and now and then the bitter wintry wind dashed the sleet against the window panes as it whistled shrilly past. Suddenly a confused sound interrupted the pleasant silence, and angry discordant voices were heard in wrathful discussion, growing louder and shriller, until it seemed as if the whole house were a bedlam.

* Prince Hohenlohe.

"It is Mary, I am sure," said Mr. Cowden, laying down his paper with a frown. "It was an unlucky day for us, wife, when she came, but this shall not be permitted. Pull the bell-rope, will you?"

Mrs. Cowden gave the bell-rope an energetic pull; there was a sudden cessation of the wrathful sounds, but the lull was only momentary, for ere the bell ceased to jingle, they arose more furiously than before. By this time Burgess, the coachman, reached the sitting-room. He was a middle-aged, respectable and very delicate negro, one of Mrs. Cowden's slaves, with more of the Anglo-Saxon type in his face than the African.

"What is the meaning of all this uproar, Burgess?" asked Mr. Cowden.

"Well you see, sir," replied Burgess, in his low-toned, gentlemanly way, "Hetty, she's been tormenting Mary in respect to some sort of prayer-beads—I think they call them—and jeering of her like; and Mary, she ups and boxes Hetty's jaws, and in course, sir, Hetty's as mad as a March hare."

"That will do, Burgess. Tell them both to come up to me."

"Yes, sir."

Mrs. Cowden understood it all at once, and while there was a flash of vexation upon her cheeks, there was a merry twinkle in her eye, and in her sweet heart, she thought that Hetty well deserved her chastisement.

Both women entered the door, looking like furies. Mary's swarthy, brown cheeks glowed like heated bronze. Hetty's orange-colored skin, scarlet, except where Mary's hand had left a crimson imprint upon her cheeks. Mrs. Cowden looked at them both sternly as they stood panting just inside the door, and did not speak for several minutes, during which time the belligerents grew more composed, and both began to feel a little ashamed.

"I don't wish you both to speak at once when I question you," said Mr. Cowden, at last. "Mary, what is the meaning of such a row in my house?"

"Well, Mar'sr I wasn't gwine to stand have'n that saucy jade thar a worrie'n my life out from mornin' to night, makin' all manner of fun of the Blessed Virgin, and a singin' her pert songs at me—."

"What did she do? Be quiet, Hetty," said Mr. Cowden, gravely.

"She was all the time singin' 'Hail Mary, old contrary,' and some more such stuff, then she took my beads and put 'em round the cat's neck, and sot her up in the chair, with my best head hankercher 'round her neck, so I slapped her jaws;" said Mary shaking her head and fist together at her foe.

"Is this true, Hetty?" asked Mr. Cowden. Mr. Cowden had taken up a book, which she held open before her face, pretending to read, but in reality to hide the smile with which her keen sense of the ridiculous dimpled her face.

"Yes, Mars'r I did," answered Hetty with a saucy air. "I didn't b'lieve in any body's religion that goes and gets drunk in bed, and I thought them ar' beads would do the cat as much good as her. Then Mars'r she made fun of us, too, she went and said our meetin's always minded her of a frog-pond with a jack-ass a braying in the middle of it, so I tore off her head hankercher' and punched her eyes."

"Shame upon both of you! Let me hear no more of such quarrels. I do not believe

in the Catholic religion, but that's no reason why I should allow one who does, to be persecuted under my roof. If Mary hopes to be saved through what it teaches, she has a right to it, and she shall not be exposed to any unkindness on account of it. Remember that, Hetty. You, who are a class-member, and give in your experience at love feasts, and profess full justification through faith, to behave in this unchristian, unmannerly way, instead of setting a good and charitable example to your fellow servants. I am ashamed of you, but go both of you and sin no more."

Mr. Cowden's remonstrances were well intended but ineffectual, for as soon as the two women got back to the kitchen, they closed the door, and without uttering a word flew at each other like two enraged cats, the result of which was that in a few moments Hetty begged for quarter.

Then Mary's fevered blood and savage nature cried out ravenously for drink, and day after day, sullen, half drunken and at times turbulent, she tried Mrs. Cowden's patience beyond expression. Then at last the spell passed off like the madness of soul at the

sound of David's harp; the fiery shadows rolled away from her brain, and unto the daughter of David she once more uttered her penitence, and besought her intercession. Mrs. Cowden had promised her to be patient with her, and faithfully she kept her word. She pitied her, for in the house, except herself and Janet, she was without a friend; the rest looked upon her as a hypocrite and idolater, and in a thousand nameless ways made her feel their scorn and dislike, which she was not slow in returning. Then, independent of moral considerations, Mary had become indispensable to Mrs. Cowden, so much so that a week or ten days' discomfort was more than compensated for in Mary's intervals of sobriety, when her thorough knowledge of her business relieved her mistress of all fatigue, and wearying responsibility.

"She is incurable, wife," Mr. Cowden said once; "but have your own way, the burthen falls on you, the discomfort on all."

"Let us hope for her amendment, dear husband. As strangely as it may sound to you, do you know that I firmly believe that Mary, with all of her faults, has true and devout re-

ligious instincts ; her devotion to those beads, and her strangely intelligent but peculiar ideas of the Virgin Mary are full of a strong, yet humble hope."

"My dear wife, it is sheer idolatry, but I believe in the possibility of there being sober and industrious brethren, and I hope your patience will find its reward in at least reforming Mary's morals. Blessed Virgin, indeed ! What is she any more than any other good woman ?" said Mr. Cowden, earnestly.

"*She* was the Mother of Jesus," said Mrs. Cowden in a loud voice. "The Mother of the 'Word made Flesh ;' His only true Mother, blessed among women, and full of grace."

Mr. Cowden started, and looked earnestly at his wife, then gathering up his law papers, which were strewed over the library table, he left the room, but her words rang through and through his brain, his heart, his soul. They were from the Bible, every word ; and yet, as much as he read the sacred book, they had never had the same deep meaning before ; and from that hour he always thought, and spoke of the most Blessed Virgin with a feeling near akin to veneration.

And little Janet now and then got permission to go to Vespers with Mary, and wondrous were the things she related to her mother, when she came home, and the two would be talking together in the gloaming, with only the ruddy firelight to make a glow amidst the shadows. And the child's dark eyes had a far-off expression in them, as she talked of the solemn music rolling through the white clouds of incense ; of the lights gleaming through the floating, misty fragrance upon the picture of the crucified Christ behind the altar ; and of the great book with the seven seals, and of the lamb resting thereon, and the faces of the cherubs smiling through the glory-tinted clouds.

"It seems to me, mamma," said the child, as she sat leaning her golden arms upon her mother's knee, and looking earnestly into her face, "that God is there, and that the altar is His throne. Why is there no splendid place made for him in our church ?"

"We believe, my dear, that a pure and humble heart is the best throne we can prepare for Him. Outward things are of small avail, if

he soul is not right before Him," said Mrs. Cowden.

"They do, too, I reckon," said Janet, "for, oh, mamma, they pray all the time, and look so reverent; only they pray with their faces towards the throne, and the priest in his garments of gold and silver, rising and kneeling, and swinging the silver urn of incense, and chanting those solemn tones, reminds me of what I read in Revelations of what John saw in his vision."

Mrs. Cowden's heart throbbed with emotion as she gazed upon the glowing face of her child, all alight with a religious enthusiasm, of which she was herself unconscious; and she drew her closer to her side, and pressing her cheek close to hers, said:

"Janet, my child, it is all very beautiful, but there's danger in it, because that is not the true and simple faith of Jesus Christ, but a corrupt and superstitious religion."

"Oh mamma! if it is that, what is it makes me feel so *rested* and satisfied when I am there kneeling before the beautiful throne, and listening to the solemn chants? And oh, mamma! wherever I turn there are pictures

of Jesus, shewing Him all the way from the Garden of Gethsemane, to Mount Calvary, and the Sepulchre, hanging against the pillars. There is one over just where Aunt Mary and I sit, and it makes me cry whenever I look at it."

"What is it, my child?"

"He—the Lord—is sitting upon a rough bench in a sort of a court-yard and the Roman soldiers are pressing the thorny crown hard down upon his temples, with thick knotted sticks, and the blood is streaming down his white cheeks, and oh! He looks so sorrowful! and there stands before Him a Roman soldier mocking him, and putting out his tongue at Jesus. Oh, mamma! what made him so patient?"

"Because He loved us, my child, and came to redeem us; and for that he suffered meekly the cruelties of the wicked," Mrs. Cowden said, quite forgetting her prejudices in the simple and true pathos of the child's words.

"And when I go to our church now, mamma," continued Janet, "I feel so lost, everything looks so bare and cold, and I hear

nothing but talk, talk, talk that I can't understand, until my head grows dizzy."

"Do you understand the Latin you hear at the church-on-the-hill, my daughter?"

"No, I don't understand Latin, mamma, that sounds like gibberish to me, but I do understand the pictures, and the *something*, that makes me wish to love God and be nearer to Him, that comes into my heart there. And, mamma, the one thing that puzzles me most is to see Aunt Mary kneeling on the bare floor all the time, praying, praying, and counting her beads as if she had to do so much of it before she died. Then, I wonder how she can be so bad at home sometimes, and so good in church."

"If sinners do not pray, my darling, how could they be forgiven?"

"Oh, yes, mamma," said Janet, her doubts all at once cleared away by this simple elucidation; "that is it. I understand it now. She prays so much, because she is such a sinner. I am glad it is in her heart to pray, ain't you, mamma?"

"Indeed I am, Janet. There is hope for all who pray."

"Ah, I like so much to go to that church," said Janet, sighing.

"Because you enjoy everything beautiful, my child. Do you remember all the splendor and glitter at Uncle H.'s when General LaFayette was his guest; the foreign ministers in their jeweled decorations, the ladies in their rich satins and diamonds and feathers; and the new chandeliers with long crystal drops, and the large mirrors, imported from France for the occasion; all sparkling and flashing together in a mass of brightness; do you recollect how delighted, how ecstatic you were, and how you went almost wild with joy, when General LaFayette smoothed your curls and kissed you before all the company?"

"Oh, yes, Mamma! I remember all that, and shall never forget it as long as I live, but it was another thing to what I see in the old church-on-the-hill, and the feeling is quite different, you know. I don't know how to tell you exactly what the difference means, but it is somehow so. The Bible, Mamma, says, we must 'love God above all things,' and when I am at the church-on-the-hill, I feel that; but when I was at Uncle H.'s I didn't think of any-

thing but LaFayette, the crystal chandeliers, the fine ladies, and the dancing, and the stars and things upon the coats of the foreigners; that was all very different, Mamma, and gave me a light fever, you know, but the other rests me and cools me." Yes, that was the feeling she had while sitting under the "shadow of the great Rock in a weary land," but it was only after many years that Janet Cowden understood it all.

"Well, good night, my darling. I am glad of anything that makes my darling happy, but I can't have you getting to be a little papist," said Mrs. Cowden, kissing her, as they separated for the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARY AND HER MISTRESS.

"I wonder what *Papist* means?" thought Janet; "it sounds as if it had something to do with paper; maybe, Mamma thinks if I go to church so often with Aunt Mary, I shall get to look like the little girls who work in the paper mill, so many of them come there, dressed in little sun-bonnets and white cotton aprons."

Innocent little Janet! she was not aware that Papist was one of the derisive names given by its enemies to that fold of which she was even then—without knowing it—one.

"I think," said Mrs. Cowden to her husband, a few days after as they sat together in the library after dinner, "that I shall pay a visit to the Catholic Church some Sunday afternoon, and see what they do there. Janet is so enchanted with all she sees and hears there.

that I really feel some curiosity to judge for myself."

"I have no fear of *you*, wife," said Mr. Cowden, gravely; "but I think it extremely injudicious to allow Janet, with her quick perceptions, her keenly æsthetic tastes, and impressive imagination to go there so often. Seed sown in such natures take very strong root."

True, Mr. Cowden, the seed had already taken deep root in your child's soul, and through it she was the last Protestant daughter of that old Protestant race.

"I feel a little uneasy, myself, sometimes," replied Mrs. Cowden; "but she is only ten years old, precocious in intellect, it is true, but a mere baby yet, and too young to understand anything save the pleasure which the music, lights, pictures and all that, affords her. But whom do you think I was introduced to to-day at Mrs. Wolf Tone's?"*

"I haven't the slightest idea."

"To a Roman Catholic devotee—a Miss Neillie W—, who is said to be a saint, canon-

*The widow and family of the Irish patriot, Wolf Tone, were neighbors of the Cowdens.

ized by the Pope because she has made twelve converts to the Church, and they say it is positively true, that the Pope rewards all Catholics who can bring converts into the Church,* by solemnly canonizing them."

"What stuff and what superstition," said Mr. Cowden, exhaling a volume of cigar smoke from his lips, which wore a smile of scorn and amusement over the folly and childishness of Catholics. "I hope, wife, that she looked more like a saint than Mary does?"

"Not like our ideals of saints, at least," said Mrs. Cowden, "for she did not sit with her eyes rolled up and her hands folded on her bosom; neither had she a halo about her head, but a frightful black bonnet with a bow on the front like the sails of a wind mill. Her eyes were kindly, quick and cheerful, and her small, shriveled hands were not still for an instant—"

Just at this moment a lady was ushered in, a legitimate friend of the family, and after the usual salutations were over, and they had all resumed their seats, Mr. Cowden said that

*This is a common idea among Protestants, and what is related here is strictly true.

his "wife had just been describing a Roman Catholic Saint she had met."

"Miss Nellie, I am sure!" said the lady, laughing. "If the blessings of the poor can make a saint, Mr. Cowden, and a life of devotion to her religion, she is surely one. There's not a poor hovel within her reach that she has not brightened with her charities. Late and early she's amongst the poor. First at a baptism, then beside a death-bed, now comforting some poor widow, now visiting and befriending the orphan, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, bearing comfort to poor prisoners; I can't tell you the half she does, but her hands are never idle in the service of the poor and suffering."

"That is a panegyric to be proud of at any rate," observed Mr. Cowden, pleasantly.

"And she is a Catholic; but do tell me one thing, does she pray on beads?" asked Mrs. Cowden so earnestly that her husband's eyes twinkled with mirth.

"Beads! my dear. I wish you could see the string of them she has! They are as large as hickory nuts, and reach from Dan to Bar-sheeba. Catch Miss Nellie without her beads,

and you might think the end of the world drew near."

"So," thought Mrs. Cowden, "not only the ignorant but the educated and refined use prayer beads, and pray to the Virgin."

Miss Nellie W—, of whom they had been speaking, belonged to one of the best old families in Southern Maryland, and in her youth possessed all those accomplishments and graces which give elegance and tone to society; but for the love of Christ she had eschewed all worldliness and devoted herself to religion and works of mercy, and lived far into old age, the faithful servant of the poor and sorrow-stricken. She rests from her labors, and if one may judge of such a life, she is crowned with eternal peace.

Their visitor sat some time with them chatting merrily of the *on dits* of the day, and among other things referred to the extreme illness of Mrs. M—, the sister of the Mayor of Washington, whose case, from the respectability and position of her family excited very general interest.

"I hear," she said, "that she is sinking slowly, and there is no earthly hope of her

getting better. Dr. S—told me yesterday that she might die at any moment. I heard that her family and friends are about having some religious ceremony, or concerted prayers—I don't know what, but it is to last nine days—for her recovery."

"It seems to me that it would be a greater miracle to restore such an one to health than if one were raised from the dead," observed Mr. Cowden. "It is preposterous, the idea of such a thing, now that the age of miracles is past. It would be sensible to resign themselves to the Divine Will."

"Catholics have uncommon faith," observed the lady, "bigger than a mustard-seed, Mr. Cowden, and I confess it staggers me to see it. I don't know anything about their peculiar belief, but they are devoted and very much in earnest about their religion. But I must say good-bye, as it is growing dark."

"So are the Mahometans and the Bhuddists very much in earnest about their religion, for that matter," observed Mr. Cowden, after she went away. But Mrs. Cowden thought there was some difference between the Mahometans,

the Bhuddists and the Catholics, as little as she knew of the latter.

And so these good, cultivated and intelligent people, full of the best instincts of humanity and religion, went groping along amidst the shadows, touching now and then the portals of Truth, but ignorant of their nearness to it, and turning off again to wander through the mazes of error. There are thousands still doing so, who are prejudiced against the faith, only *through ignorance* of its dogmas, to whom a clear, simple definition of it, such as the Catechism of the Council of Trent gives, would do more to convert than all the learned arguments of all the most learned theologians who ever lived. Some I have known who were versed in all the knowledge that science and learning affords, who knew the Catholic religion only through perverted history and the popular Jeremiades against the Dark Ages—dark indeed to some—and I have seen some of this class brought to know the Faith by finding out, or learning by accident, some of the very simplest rudiments of the belief of Catholics. But this digression shall not be prolonged; for we will relate a little incident

that occurred about this time, which softened Mrs. Cowden's heart yet more in behalf of her Catholic slave.

Mary had an old, worn-out Catholic prayer book, which had once belonged to her old "Mistress," and one Sunday afternoon, on the way to church, she confided the secret of its possession to Janet, who forthwith volunteered to read it to her whenever she wished her to do so. Mary did not care for the prayers much, but the hymns delighted her, and she never tired of hearing them read. One Sunday night, when Mr. Cowden and the other members of the family had all gone out to church, Mrs. Cowden, who was sitting in the nursery, thought she would step down to see what had become of Janet. She was not in the drawing room, the library or dining room. The kitchen was an interdicted place to the children, and the cook had standing orders to pin a dish-cloth to the skirt of every little adventurer who straggled thither, who, unconscious of his appendage, wandered innocently up "stairs and down stairs," until he came into "my lady's chamber," where the circumstantial evidence that he bore along usually

brought him to grief. But kitchenward Mrs. Cowden went, and as she approached, she thought she heard a low sound of singing, and stepping softly she soon reached the door, and saw Janet and Mary seated at the kitchen table—the lamp between them—singing from a book—the old prayer book. Janet's clear, treble tones rose distinctly above the hoarse, tremulous voice of Mary, and they sang the quaint and devotional old hymn, beginning:

"Saw ye, my Saviour? Saw ye, my Saviour and God?
Oh, He died on Calvary, to atone for you and me,
And to purchase our pardon with blood."

And she stood listening to the old monastic hymn until it ended where the Lord, "embalmed in spices sweet, was in a sepulchre laid!" she had heard the whole pathetic story of Calvary, and tears coursed unbidden down her cheeks, as they sang of his bleeding wounds, His thirst, His last words, His dying! There it all was; her child need go to hear no elaborate sermon to learn how her salvation had been purchased; there it was all narrated with tender and simple pathos in the old Catholic hymn. Mrs. Cowden looked at the twain, and thought of Una and the Lion;

of Beauty and the Beast; of Philip and the Ethiopian servant of Queen Candace; and when their voices ceased, she turned away silently, went back to the nursery, resumed her seat beside her sleeping boy's side, and opened her Bible. Her eyes fell upon these words:

"But one in Council rising up, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a Doctor of the Law, and respected by all the people, commanded the men to be put forth a little while. And he said to them: 'Ye men of Israel take heed to yourselves what you intend to do touching these men.' For before these days rose up Theodas, affirming himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves; who was slain; and all that believed in him were scattered and brought to nothing. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the enrolling, and drew away the people after him; he also perished; and all, even as many as consented to him, were dispersed. And now, therefore, I say to you, refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel, or this work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it; lest per-

haps you be found even to fight against God."

And Mrs. Cowden took the lesson to heart. Not only would she place no impediment in the way of Mary's faith, or in any manner take advantage of her right over her, as her slave, "lest she should be found to fight even against God," but she would from henceforth lend her a helping hand, and make opportunities for her to attend her church more frequently; and as to Janet, well, if it was God's work, it would go on in spite of her, if it was not His work it would surely come to naught.

Mary was a sore trial at times, an anomaly, a burthen to her spirit, and full of contradictions, but even while she pitied her case, and had cause to gird up her patience, Mrs. Cowden felt convinced that the tenacity of purpose which she manifested in her religious belief was no sham, but the result of a deeply-seated faith, and with the needful assistance all might yet be well with her. She was morally, not spiritually blind, and must not be left to wander at will among the pitfalls of the wilderness, but be softened and hedged in with kindness and care; she must be more humanized by sympathy, and she hoped that at

last the little, choked-up seed, would spring up and bear good fruits. If her religious faith could produce so saintly a character as Miss Nellie W—, who prayed to the Virgin on beads and was affluent in all the best Christian works, why need she despair of Mary?

Mrs. Cowden sought an opportunity to ask Mary some questions, which elicited the fact, that she was not at all a practical Catholic, and had not been for many years; that she neither went to Mass, to Confession nor to Communion. She had held on only to the Faith through her devotion to the Blessed Virgin and her Rosary, this was the only tie that saved her from utter shipwreck. Poor soul! her trust in humanity had been crushed out by the cruelty of man, and amidst the ruin of her better self, all hope, leaving consolation aside, had been nearly blotted out. In her new home, she had felt the patient kindness of her Protestant mistress with softened gleams of gratitude, but the servants, all sleek, proud mulattoes, who plumed themselves on having always, for several generations, belonged to "the same old family," who had a certain refinement and intelligence, which really rais-

ed them above the generality of their class—looked down upon her, scoffed at her religion, and would not associate with her. These were Mary's daily trials, which, acting on her morbid and evil nature, lowered still more her self-respect, until it was almost extinct. Like swarms of venomous gnats, stinging and blinding her, she was ever on the defensive, exasperate and defiant, to strike out blindly around her, careless of who and what was hurt, so that somebody was. Mrs. Cowden advised her to go and see her priest, which she promised to do, but whenever she had made up her mind to go, some fresh outbreak made her lose courage, and put it off to a more convenient season. But all of her duties to her kind mistress were faithfully discharged; the fulfilling of them had become a sort of religion to her which she scrupulously observed; then at intervals, her rosary indicated that her soul could not be satisfied without a higher service, a more spiritual devotion.

Ah! if the soul's struggles could be written and its deep mysteries unveiled, how quickly would the pious cease to be scandalized in an overwhelming pity and compassion, how swiftly

would their charity be kindled to witness the keen remorse, the weakness, the aspiration, the bruises, the sorrowful outcries of their tortured and tempted brother! instead of cold, reproachful looks, and a drawing of the garment closer to avoid contact with the sinner, speak kindly and forbear gently, remembering all the time these words:

"If I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and I have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, *I am nothing*. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver up my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth nothing."*

*Corinthians, xiii, 1, 2, 3

CHAPTER IX.

"FAITH AS A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED."

Mrs. Cowden had not only questioned Mary and given her opportunities to attend Mass on Sundays, but advised her to do whatever her church required of its members. But the old slave-apathy, with a sense of her own shortcomings, kept her back from the Sacraments; her old gray rosary, and her devotion to the Blessed Virgin, were truly the only outward vestiges left to her of the piety of her youth. This woman's faith, living through the better fortunes of her oppressed and suffering life, and the peculiarly depressing influences of her low estate, convinced Mrs. Cowden that to her at least there was a vitality in it that was not of the "earth earthy," and she promised herself over and over again never to attempt doing the least thing which would tend to extin-

guish it, but breathe kindly upon it into a flame in the poor, harassed, tempted soul. But Mary got no further than Mass and Vespers; something seemed to hold her back from the Sacraments, and yielding to the temptation, she made no effort to shake off the heavy lethargy. But she clung to her beads; this devotion was like the last plank after shipwreck, and she never let it go—floating above the turbid tide, or tossed among the breakers, beaten against the rocks, or sinking into the depths, she clung to it, and would still cling even if she perished. The anomaly was puzzling to those around her, who saw her failings and felt the discomfort of her humors. With their ideas of "conviction," "justification" and "sanctification," it was like the most preposterous mockery that such a being should presume to lay the least claim to the smallest hope.

One morning Mrs. Cowden was in her nursery, engaged with all a mother's pride in curling the dark, silky hair of her pet child, "little Jamie," a beautiful boy of three years. Mary stood near them, with a plate of warm ginger cakes in her hand, which she had just brought up to the children, and watched mother and

child with a softened and pleased expression in her usually hard visage, for she loved them both; the little boy especially was her greatest pet among the children. There came a tap at the nursery door, which opened a little way, and the respectable and solemn face of Burgess appeared, and he announced that:

"Mrs. Tone was in the drawing-room, and wished to see Missis."

We find ourselves using big words to represent Burgess, from a desire to represent him to our readers, but alas, no language can possibly portray his ineffable self-consciousness, the gentlemanly gravity of his demeanor, or the look which betrayed a feeling of responsibility to all creation for the manner in which he discharged his functions. He was among the last representative of the old negro gentleman "of the olden time," and the dying out of his class is not a sign of the world's progress. We shall hear of him again.

"Yes, Burgess. Say to Mrs. Tone that I will be with her in a few moments," said Mrs. Cowden, putting the child from her lap, and distributing the ginger cakes with a kiss all round. Hetty came into the nursery at that

moment, and she hurried down to her visitor, who had come in in her morning wrapper, and with no covering on her head, except the elegant India muslin turban which she invariably wore.*

"I have run in, my dear, *sans ceremonie*," she exclaimed in her genial way, as she held Mrs. Cowden's hand, "to ask if you have heard any of the particulars of the remarkable event which has just happened in the city,† and of which the papers are full?"

"I am delighted to see you, Mrs. Tone, but am sorry to disappoint you. I have not looked into the morning papers, nor have I heard any tidings from the outside world since yesterday evening. What is this astonishing event?"

"The most wonderful thing of modern times! I declare it gives me a nervous chill to think of it," exclaimed Mrs. Tone; "but I will keep you in suspense no longer. You know all about Mrs. M—."

"Mrs. M—, the Mayor's sister, who has been so many years ill?"

* Mrs. Tone was a Protestant

† Washington.

"The same; she has been bedridden these many years with incurable diseases. I have friends who know her well."

"Is she dead?" inquired Mrs. Cowden.

"No. *She is cured*. Cured suddenly yesterday by a miracle, and the whole city and town are in a state of commotion about it. The paper states that at least a thousand persons visited the house yesterday to see her. It seems absolutely incredible that such a miracle should happen in the nineteenth century," said Mrs. Tone, her warm, Irish heart overflowing with emotion. "But here is Mr. Cowden; of course you have heard all about this, Mr. Cowden?"

"Good morning, and yes, my dear madam, for I suppose you allude to the sudden recovery of Mrs. M—. The morning papers all speak of it, and on my way home I met old Dr. S—, one of her physicians, who spoke of the case. I learn that crowds of people are thronging to see her, and I hope sincerely there is no deception in the matter; the well-known piety, intelligence and position of the family seem to forbid even such a suspicion."

"I think that they have simply misunder-

stood some natural effect for a miracle. I have often heard that the most dreadful nervous complaints sometimes leave the system instantaneously. Mrs. M— may have been affected with a complication of nervous disorders," said Mrs. Cowden, as incredulous as Thomas.

"Dr. S— declares not. He told me that he had watched and tended the case for years, and had never had one which so completely baffled his skill. He said that when he saw her late the evening before last, he considered her in a dying condition, but they were going on with their prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary and her Divine Son, and saints, without end, for her recovery. You know, wife, that the Dr. is a staunch old Wesleyan Methodist, eminent in his profession, and possessed of too great a fund of common sense to be carried away from substantial facts by any excitement or sophistry whatever. He told me that she was diseased from head to foot; that every organ was more or less implicated in the general decay; and he could impute the cure to nothing but the power of God."

"It is very extraordinary," said Mrs. Cowden, gravely. And she thought: "*They*

prayed too, to the Virgin Mary. Can it be true that her Son is more propitious to her prayers than to the prayers of others?" but she said nothing about her thoughts.

"It is perfectly amazing," said Mrs. Tone, "what faith Catholics have. I could tell you instances of it which I have known in Ireland, which you would scarcely credit. In faith they are equal to those who, in olden times, 'brought forth their sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that when Peter came his *shadow* might at the least overshadow some of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities.'"

"I am a little skeptical about Mrs. M—'s cure. I fear, poor lady, that her relief is only temporary," said Mrs. Cowden, looking out the window as a carriage drew up. "Here comes Editha, looking intent on something," she added, as her sister-in-law, Mrs. Col. McK—, stepped from her carriage. In another moment she was in the drawing room exchanging salutations with them all.

"How do you all do? I have just come in from Weston, and am going right over to the city to hear all about this wonderful miracle.

The Colonel came out last night in the greatest excitement about it that you can imagine; he had really been to see Mrs. M —, and saw her well and cheerful with his own eyes," said Mrs. McK—, without having stopped to ask what they were talking about, or whether they had heard of the cure, so certain was she that it was impossible to talk of or discuss any other subject. "Come, some of you, with me."

"I confess," said Mrs. Tone, "that it will give me great pleasure to go, Mrs. McK—, and if you can wait until I go back and change my dress, I will not detain you ten minutes."

"Thank you very much, Mrs. Tone, for going with me. Do not hurry yourself, as it is perfectly convenient for me to wait. Then we will call for Mrs. Iturbide," said Mrs. McK—.

"They'll come back papists, I am sure," said Mr. Cowden, laughing, as he rose and pulled the bell to order the carriage. "Come, wife, we might as well go with the rest of the world. Go up and make your toilette. I'll entertain Editha, and you can bring Janet, if you like."

"Of course, I'll go; and Editha, if I should not come down before Mrs. Tone comes in,

we will all meet at the Mayor's," said Mrs. Cowden, leaving the room to get ready.

They found a crowd of carriages in front of the Mayor's house, and saw a throng of people of both sexes, well dressed and respectable-looking, pressing along the sidewalk, on their way thither. "What went they out to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went they out to see? a prophet?" Some who were hurrying along felt and knew that they were going to see more—aye, the work of more than a prophet under that roof; others came to see with their own eyes the woman who had been miraculously raised from the bed of death, healed in an instant of all her infirmities. Some came fully impressed with the truth of the miracle, and these believed, because they knew that God is immutable and omniscient; that He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, and full of mercy to grant the prayers of those who have faith as a "grain of mustard seed." But many of them were strangers to the Church to whom God has given miraculous powers of supernatural import, and had faith in this miracle, because they believed their Bible, in which the promises of Christ are recorded, the

animus of their religion being a sort of generalizing toleration, which they called "charity to all." There were others who came with smiles of derision on their lips, and scoffing in their hearts at what they considered the credulity and superstition of people who could imagine that a hysteric illness required a miracle to cure it; some thought the whole thing a sham in the interests of the Church; in short, it was now just as it was in the days of Jesus, when Jew and Gentile "put out the tongue," and cavilled, and doubted, and derided *His* wonderful works, while many who believed were silent through fear of ridicule and loss of caste.

Mr. and Mrs. Cowden sent in their cards and those of Mrs. Tone and Mrs. Col. McK—, to Capt. C—, the Mayor, who immediately sent out to invite them in, and himself received them with hospitable welcome at the hall door. He conducted them into his sitting room, the only spot in the whole of the large house not crowded with strangers, and introduced them to one of his sisters, Miss C—, who happened to come in just as they entered. Capt. C— introduced them as "Protestant friends from

—town," and she welcomed them in a polite and dignified manner, putting every one at ease, which required no slight tact under the peculiar circumstances of the visit. Then the conversation turned on the absorbing subject which occupied their minds. Mrs. Cowden, full of delicate instincts, would have made a graceful apology for coming, but Mrs. C— interrupted her, saying: "No need to apologize, I assure you, Mrs. Cowden. This great thing that has happened is God's work, and it is but right that it should be seen by all, that He may be glorified. We did not invite publicity, but as soon as my sister was cured, the news seemed to spread like wildfire, and people of all classes began to come and were admitted to see her. She said: 'Let it be known to the ends of the earth what the Lord hath done for me; it is His work, not man's.'"

There was no affectation of religious fervor or sanctimonious enthusiasm in Miss C—'s manner, but the words were uttered gravely, quietly, and carried with them a weight of truth, and an impression of simple sincerity.

"Would it be trying you too much, Miss C—, to give us an account of the—of Mrs.

M—'s cure? We are all deeply interested in the event."

Mrs. Cowden would not say miracle.

"Certainly not, Mrs. C—, but would you like to see my sister first? She is receiving numbers of people up stairs, and really seems quite unwearied, while I had to make my escape to my brother's here, for a few moments' rest and quiet.

"I think," said Mrs. Cowden, glancing round at her friends, who nodded assent, "that it will be more interesting to hear the particulars of her illness and cure first."

Capt. C— was engaged in conversation on the absorbing topic with Mr. Cowden, in another room, and Miss C— began:

"Perhaps you are aware that my sister, Mrs. M—, was ill for some years, most of the time entirely bed-ridden. The peculiarity of her case, and her extraordinary sufferings, excited unusual interest throughout the community. My brother being a public man, the illness of a member of his family of course became more generally known than had he been in private life. Within the last year Mrs. M—'s disease assumed such a terrible phase of suffering, as

touching the hearts of all who witnessed it, with the deepest commiseration. I cannot even attempt to describe all that she endured. She could eat nothing, sleep but little, and, except when excited to momentary strength by almost insupportable pains, was too weak to lift her head from the pillow, often too weak to swallow her drinks. In all this time no murmur escaped her, and finally, from lying so long in one position, her back became covered with bed-ulcers, and her bones nearly pierced through the skin. When we changed her bed linen she had to be lifted in a sheet, and held up in that way by four of the servants, until the bed was made comfortable, and clean things put on. The slightest movement gave her the most excruciating torture, from those angry ulcers on her spine and shoulders; and from head to foot within and without there seemed to be no sound spot in her. The doctors came, the most eminent medical aid was called in, but the case baffled the skill of medicine, and they all declared that she was incurable. They called it a "complication of diseases," and wondered how she existed from day to day. Her patience never

failed her, and the sacraments were her greatest and only consolation. One day, her Confessor and Father Matthew, touched with tender pity at the sight of her sufferings, advised a Novena—that is nine days' prayer—for her recovery. A number of miracles had been wrought in Europe about this time, through the prayers of the Prince, Bishop Hohenloe, and Father — wrote to ask him to name the prayers for the Novena, and unite with us in them, for my sister's recovery; and he lost no time in writing to tell us that he would do all that we wished, and named a day for the Novena to begin. This day was two days after the reception of his letter."

"Will you please tell us, Miss —, what a Novena is?" said Mrs. Cowden.

"A number of persons make up their minds to pray for a certain object during nine days. They begin by confessing their sins, receiving Communion, and saying the prescribed prayers on the first day; every day after, until the ninth, they visit a church and offer the prayers before the Blessed Sacrament; on the ninth day they confess and commune again, which ends the Novena. Of course in this particu-

lar Novena, my sister herself assisted as well as she could at home. Some of us feared that it was injudicious, that it would only excite false hopes; and render the disappointment more bitter; many of our friends thought us half crazy, to pray for what seemed so hopeless a thing; in fact we met with but little encouragement from any, except the few who joined with us in the Novena."

"And what did Mrs. M— herself think of it, or hope from it?" inquired Mrs. Tone.

"She seemed to have but one sentiment in regard to it," continued Miss C—, "and that was a perfect, implicit trust and submission to the will of Almighty God; neither hopes nor fears, nor anxiety disturbed her; she reposed entirely in the divine will, with the most unquestioning and humble faith. We feared sometimes that she would not live through the Novena; her physicians thought her sinking oftentimes, and the eighth day we thought it impossible for her to survive the night. Her pulse was so low, as to be scarcely perceptible, sometimes it left the wrist altogether; her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth; her pallid, pinched features were covered with a

cold, clammy sweat, and a gray shadow overspread her countenance; the precursors, we thought, of speedy dissolution."

"Yes," said Capt. C—, "at midnight all these signs appeared to me to be the forerunners of death. I had lost much rest; my nerves were unstrung; I felt that I could not see her die, so I kissed her, looked a sorrowful farewell and went up to my room, telling my sisters to let me know when all was over. I threw myself on my bed, and fell into a sound sleep from sheer exhaustion."

"And," continued Miss C—, "towards dawn she seemed so near her last agony that I feared she would die without the holy Viaticum, for she could no longer swallow even a drop of water; the muscles of her throat had stiffened, and her extremities were icy cold; she could only turn her sad eyes, with a loving and imploring look, from one to another, as if bidding us adieu, then fix them again upon the crucifix which one of us held before her. We expected Father ——— every instant, with the Blessed Sacrament; and presently, to our great joy and her's we heard his footsteps on the stairs. In another moment he was in the

room, and we were all kneeling in adoration of Him whom he bore with him, and who under the guise of "bread," had come to console the dying. He deposited the Blessed Sacrament on the little altar which stood near the side of my sister's bed, vested himself in surplice and stole, and began the rite, when one of us thought to tell him that she could not swallow."

At this part of Miss C—'s narrative a tall, dignified, high-featured lady, dressed in black silk, came in. There was a healthful tint in her complexion; no sign of recent illness in her face, which was lit by a serene smile; and she moved with erect and graceful carriage, pausing only an instant, as if surprised to find strangers in Capt. C—'s sanctum.

"My friends," said Captain C—, taking her hand, "this is my sister, Mrs. M—. Nancy, these are some Protestant friends of mine, from —town, who have come to see you and congratulate you on your cure."

Could it be that this woman, apparently in the full flush of health, with a cheerful countenance, strong, graceful, erect, was the same suffering one they had just heard described? It seemed incredible, and like Mrs. Tone, all

felt a nervous thrill shoot through and through them.

She received their congratulations, and all the kind things that were said, in a cordial way, her manner tempered by a gravity which was far from oppressive to her visitors, but which struck them all as well befitting one who had, like Moses, been so nigh unto God in the flesh, and asked if her sister had been giving them the particulars of her restoration to health.

"Yes," said Miss C—, "I was just describing the condition that you were in when Father — brought the Blessed Sacrament to you."

"Ah! well, there is but little more to tell," said Mrs. M—, her eyes brightening with a soft glow, and unconsciously to herself, a swift, holy sort of an expression settling on her face; "the supreme moment was near at hand. Father — asked me if I thought I had strength to swallow the Sacrament, and moistened my lips with a little water. I tried to swallow a drop or two that had trickled down on my parched tongue, but found it impossible. He thought me dying. He feared to place the

Sacred Host upon my tongue, I was so far gone, and he commended me to the mercy of Almighty God, and would have begun to read the prayers for the departing soul, but I implored him with my eyes, saying all I could through them, to administer the Holy Communion to me. He waited a little while, he was perplexed what to do; but as I grew no worse, he all at once determined to comfort my departing spirit with the Bread of Life, if possible. I saw him elevate the Sacred Host, and heard the words: *Ecce Agnus Dei*; then I saw no more, my sight became obscured by a sudden dimness as he, with great difficulty, laid it upon my tongue. All knelt silently around my bed. Could this darkness, and coldness, and sinking, be death? Suddenly—as sudden and swift as lightning—I felt a gentle shock throughout my entire system, and at the same instant a sweet moisture like sweetened water, filled my mouth, a glow spread through and through me, and immediately, without the slightest difficulty, I swallowed the Blessed Sacrament. My soul was full to overflowing of a divine emotion, a burning, rapturous feeling of love towards God;

my tongue was unlocked, and lifting my hands, I exclaimed: 'Praise be to Jesus.' I thought of nothing else then; this feeling swallowed up all others; but presently I became conscious of a great strength, of a rapturous sensation of health, of a fulness of life, tiding in regular pulsations through my veins, and lifting myself up, I cried out: 'I am cured! Give thanks to God! I am cured! I am well!'

"Father——looked as if he would faint, and said: 'Be quiet, be quiet, my dear child——perhaps you deceive yourself——this may not be a cure. Rest composed a little while.' My sisters were excited greatly, and were weeping with joy.

"'I am *not* deceived, my Father,' I said. 'I am well, thanks be to God, I am well, and wish to rise and dress.' I raised myself up, and Father——, now convinced, said:

"'Wait then my child until I leave the room. I will go and offer thanks for you in another Mass.'

"Then," added Miss C——, "she got out of bed, and *dressed herself*! In changing her under garments, I looked at her back, which

a few moments ago was, I knew, covered with ulcers; but not one was left, they were healed, and not a single scar remained."

"Ah!" said Miss M——, "our loving Lord does nothing by halves."

"Then," said Mrs. C——, "I ran up to my brother's room and awoke him. He asked me if our sister was dying? 'but,' said he, 'you look very strangely! what's the matter?' 'No, Tom!' I exclaimed, 'she is cured; she has got up and dressed herself, and *walked* all round.'"

"And," here put in Capt. C——, "I was so completely overcome by the news that the circulation of my blood seemed to stop, and sir, I had to go down, and split nearly a cart-load of wood before it was restored. Then I went up to see Nancy, and she was sitting at a table eating a breakfast of broiled chicken, rolls and coffee, and looking better than I ever saw her look in her life."

"In the confusion that filled the house," said Miss C——, "*three* breakfasts were taken up to her at different times, by different members of the family——"

"Yes," interrupted Mrs. M——, "and I, for

getful in my great joy and thankfulness of all else, believe that I ate heartily of each; certainly the food had a great relish, and, I suppose, being so long without food, I was hungry. But I did not know what I was doing."

"I must tell you a little incident that will make you smile," said Miss C—. "In the midst of our joy and excitement, our old slave, Maumy, who has not left her corner for years, hobbled up stairs, and stood leaning on her stick, looking at Mrs. M—; at last she said: 'Miss Nancy, what you go do that ar for, honey, skeering me most to deff?' She was soon pacified though, and gave thanks to God as heartily as any of us. Then people began to come, first friends, then acquaintances, and our own clergy; and others of every denomination—doctors, lawyers, strangers—and they have kept on coming; our house has been besieged with them from morning till night, and we are all feeling worn out, except Mrs. M—, who seems to grow stronger every hour."

"I congratulate you, from my heart, madam," said Mr. Cowden, offering his hand to Mrs. M—; "your experience, has been a

wonderful, and I have no doubt, a supernatural one. I thank you all very much for this interesting interview, and hope that we shall have the pleasure of seeing you under our own roof. My friend, Capt. C—, has promised that our visit shall be returned."

"Yes," said Mrs. Cowden, "I should be truly sorry to think that an acquaintance commenced under such auspices should end here. I suppose our being Protestants will be no obstacle to our better acquaintance."

"None in the least," said Mrs. M—, pressing Mrs. Cowden's hand. "Come again to see us whenever you can."

"But," said Mrs. Tone, who had shed floods of tears, "do you think you will ever be sick again?"

"I do not think you die any more!" said Mrs. Iturbide, in her sweet, broken English.

"I have no such vain expectations," said Mrs. M—, while the same glow and far-away expression, that they noticed before, lighted up her face. "None of us can hope to be exempt from suffering until we are admitted into that blessed land, 'where death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow

shall be any more.' Until then, God's holy will be done, whether for ease or pain, life or death."

Mutual farewells were spoken. Mrs. M— went back to the crowds who were waiting to see her and question her, and our friends took their departure, variously impressed by what they had heard and seen, but all of them fully convinced that whatever might be the errors of the Catholic religion, God had here rewarded individual faith and patience in a most wonderful manner. With one thing in their interviews with the C—s and Mrs. M—, they had been particularly struck, and that was, the utter absence of everything like cant or sanctimoniousness, and the simple dignity and earnest sincerity in their manner of relating the particulars of this miracle, whose fame went abroad through the world—another convincing proof that the power of God dwells with His Church.

The foregoing account is what was impressed on Janet Cowden's memory at the time of the visit, and what she learned from Mrs. M— and the C—'s only a few years ago,

in the room where this manifestation of God's mercy took place, when she came back from a Southern home a Catholic wife, and the mother of Catholic children. The name of Mrs. M—'s confessor—a French gentleman—is forgotten, but he was assistant pastor of old St. Patrick's Church, in Washington, at the time. The whole is thrown into form in this little narrative, to show the impression such things make upon the minds of Protestants as well as Catholics, and because it formed one of those deep and lasting influences in the mind of Janet Cowden, which finally led her into the Fold of the Church. The C— family have a regularly attested record of the miracle, which was printed in the Catholic and Protestant papers of the day; and there are hundreds still living in Washington who can remember the immense sensation created among all classes by the miraculous cure of Mrs. M—.

A. H. D.

VERY REV. E. SORIN: The miracle related in this chapter was the cure of Mrs. Ann Mattingly, sister of Capt. Thomas Carberry, then Mayor of Washington. Everything is

strictly true, the manner of my parents' visit, and all connected with it. I knew Mrs. Mattingly *intimately*, and have heard the account I give *repeatedly* from her own lips, from Capt. Carberry and their sister, Miss Ruth Carberry. Mrs. Mattingly died seven or eight years ago, nearly eighty years of age, but never had a day's sickness from the day she was cured until her last illness. She was active and swift in her movements, very erect, and spent her life in tending the Sanctuary and Altar of St. Patrick's Church, and in charitable works. In haste, respectfully,

A. H. DORSEY

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

About this time a melancholy event happened in the Cowden family, in which Mary was innocently involved, which led to the emancipation of their slaves, and their removal to Southern Virginia.

One night Mr. and Mrs. Cowden went to hear a celebrated minister of their sect preach, and as it was "Hetty's Sunday out," Mary was left in charge of the children, with strict injunctions not to go down stairs from them, or suffer the night lamp, which stood upon a niche far out of the children's reach, to be taken down.

Dick, Mary's son, a boy of twelve years old, and very fond of the little Cowdens, who was quiet and gentle in his habits, and whom the children loved, was allowed to come up into the nursery with his mother to amuse them

That day he had received, at Sunday-school, for his good behavior and correct lessons, a gaily colored picture book of the story of "Joseph and his Brethren," which appeared to him to be the most magnificent and dazzling thing that the world ever produced. He amused the children for some time, as they lay in bed, describing the pictures, and telling them as much of the narrative as he could recollect; but this did not satisfy the little fellows; they begged, and insisted upon seeing the marvellous pictures, but Dick coaxed them to wait until "to-morrow."

Mary was in and out, now in Janet's little room, now back by the crib, crooning over the baby, now giving Dick a cuff—which he received as a matter of course—for talking above his breath.

Unfortunately the baby awoke and began to fret for a drink of water, and by some strange oversight, or carelessness, none had been brought up; so Mary, after charging them all not to move out of bed, and ordering Dick to watch the baby, ran down to fetch a pitcher of water. She had been anxious all day to speak to her husband about something

which she considered important, but he had been out, and did not return until Mr. and Mrs. Cowden had gone to church, so that she missed seeing him. When Dick came up he told her that his "daddy" was at the men's "quarters," which stood off about one hundred and fifty yards from the house. Near by stood the pump, and Mary leaving all things snug and safe in the nursery, thought she would "kill two birds with one stone:" get a cool pitcher of water from the pump, and peep into the "quarter," a moment to speak to Ned, who was there smoking his corn-cob pipe, and chatting with the other men.

But Mary had scarcely left the room, when it entered the boys' heads that their opportunity was come, and they forthwith ordered Dick to take down the lamp, and produce his book. Dick hesitated, but they ordered, and coaxed, and plead; and he, as anxious to show his prize as they were to see it, yielded, for there was no higher authority present to forbid it, and he was sure they could take a peep at all the gorgeous pictures before his "mammy" got back. He sprang upon a chair—the baby's high chair—stretched up his arm, standing on

tip-toe, and took down the lamp, which he placed carefully in the middle of the floor; and in another moment, three rosy, white-robed boys, ranging from eight to four years old, were leaping from their low cots to throw themselves around it to see the wonderful pictures. But little brown-haired Jamie, who always skipped and danced, instead of walking, in his efforts to get as near as possible to Dick, flung his night-gown into the flame of the lamp. In an instant he was enveloped in flames, which rose far above his head; while from behind the fiery veil his agonized shrieks rang piercingly out.

This was the sight that met Mary's horror-stricken gaze as she entered the nursery door, holding the pitcher of water in her hand. She sprang forward, and emptied it on the fierce flames, and the little form, but a moment ago as fair and beautiful as one of Correggio's Angels, sunk a blackened, moaning heap upon the floor. The other children were crouched, speechless with terror, in a corner, and Dick had disappeared. He had run down, shrieking to the quarter for help. Janet had rushed to the door, where she heard her brother's

screams, but had fallen fainting upon the little cot, yet warm, from which he had a moment before so merrily risen.

We will not attempt to depict the anguish of the fond parents, who, being immediately sent for, returned to their home so recently left in peace and safety, to find it filled with alarm and terror, and the fairest and loveliest of their children breathing his last in all the agonies of a violent and painful death. Friends came thronging in, and the first and best medical men of the two cities were brought to his relief, but to no avail. The tenderest love, the greatest skill, the most vigilant care, could not save little brown-haired Jamie; he had inhaled the flames as they were around and above him, like a fiery armor, causing internal injuries, which made death inevitable. Before the sunlight crept through the branches of the old tree outside the window, into the darkened room, little Jamie's soul was with the great company of glorified children in heaven, and his disfigured body, lately so beautiful, was arrayed in the vestments of death. The soft, brown, curling hair so often smoothed, caressed and taken pride in by those nearest

and dearest, from the roots to the crisp edges, had turned perfectly white in that hour of fright and agony.

It was many days before the exact facts of the case could be come at, for Mary was like a deranged woman, accusing herself of it all, and refusing to be comforted. The statement of the little boys and Dick threw a pretty correct light on the catastrophe, but they could not tell *why* Mary had left them alone.

The truthful little fellows took all the blame upon themselves about the lamp, and shed abundance of tears, while the servants and others did not hesitate to say that poor Mary had gone down, not for water, but for something stronger. But as we know she was innocent of this, as was afterwards satisfactorily proved to Mr. and Mrs. Cowden.

The whisper ran around: "What more was to have been expected when a woman of Mary's habits was left in charge of children?" This idea also echoed itself in the bleeding heart of the bereaved mother, sharpening its natural pangs by self-reproach, until her grief brought her near the verge of the grave. It was not only a bitter trial, but a terrible event

in itself, which impressed a frightful gloom on all the surroundings. The smell of the burning night-dress, the scorched and crisping flesh of the child, seemed to cling with subtle tenacity to the walls, the hangings, and to the very garments of the household, while the piercing cries of the dying child seemed to echo in every sound.

Under these circumstances Mr. Cowden determined to leave G—, and settle in Southern Virginia, where he had large business interests. The slaves belonging to himself and wife were unconditionally emancipated and provided for for six months; his affairs were settled as speedily as possible, and he moved his family to a pleasant home in an old seaport town of Southern Virginia, where they soon found themselves surrounded by genial and hospitable friends.

All of the emancipated slaves did well, except Mary; and it may be of interest to some who have followed the homely incidents of this little narrative, to know that some of the descendants of Mrs. Cowden's slaves are now among the wealthiest and most respectable men of their district. But poor Mary—but

we will not anticipate—we must lose sight of her for a little while.

The Catholic impressions, which, strangely enough, through Mary, had been made on the minds of Mrs. Cowden and Janet, found but little in N—to keep them alive. It is true that there was a small Catholic Church there, in a secluded, out-of-the-way place, on the very edge of the salt marshes, which was half overgrown with ivy, and surrounded by great, sombre-looking cedars, and old, gray, crumbling tombs, bearing upon their mildewed faces the noble names of the old French *émigrés* who colonized the settlement nearly a century before. The congregation consisted of a hundred or two old French Catholics, with about a score of quadroons, wearing huge gold rings in their noses and ears, who had escaped with the whites from the massacre at St. Domingo, their color rendering them as obnoxious to the blacks as were the full-blooded whites. The pastor of this congregation was not known outside of it as any other than a “popish priest, full of mystery and hypocrisy, like the rest of his class,” who was shunned on all occasions. When Janet inquired of her school-mates about

the old church, she heard such dreadful things that her heart felt faint within her, and she was told that “nobody ever went there, but the old French people and the Guinea niggers, and they were all idolaters together—a great sight worse than the Jews.”

This was a sort of quietus to Janet for a while; notwithstanding she often felt an almost irresistible desire to go and see for herself; she longed once more to see the altar-throne, the incense glistening with the burning lights behind it; and to hear the soft, solemn jubilates of the organ. But she dared not venture. She could see the old church from her bed-room window, a broad arm of the river running up between her and the salt marshes around it, and she sometimes heard, on quiet Sunday evenings, when the wind swept in soft gusts from the south, the solemn tones of the organ rising and falling with it, and dying away as if it were floating out on the blue rippling waters, to the broad river beyond. But she could get no nearer. Her father's sect were peculiarly bitter against the Catholics, and they would have considered

him disgraced, had he allowed one of his family to go to the old French church.

Janet and her brothers had to pass the little house where the Catholic priest lived, every day, going and returning from school, and on summer evenings when they espied the good, unconscious man sitting in his vine-covered porch, reading his office, and solacing himself at intervals with a pinch of snuff, they would hurry over to the other side of the way, their hearts beating audibly, their eyes cast down, and clinging to each other, as they crept by, with a feeling that at any moment he might pounce upon them, and drag them into his den. And yet these children never heard any direct, outspoken abuse of the Catholic religion. It was there as elsewhere (except in the old Spanish and French settlements) in the South, Catholics and their religion were looked upon with a sort of contemptuous indifference; they were considered as a people who deliberately and knowingly joined themselves unto idols in the light of gospel truth, and denied the simplicity of true religion, rejecting all spiritual beliefs. Their not uniting with the various Protestant sects around them in their

religious exercises, conferred these erroneous ideas. They were as much separated from the associations and sympathies of their fellow-citizens as if they were walled in a moral *ghetto*, in which the only bond of fellowship known with the outside world was money or business. I am writing now of thirty-five years ago, since which strange and marvellous changes have occurred, and the Faith has been "marching on" with steady strides, making level the mountains, and filling up the valleys, until there are but few left in all the broad land who have not heard the truth of the "One Lord, One Faith and One Baptism."

But in those days, particularly in Virginia and North Carolina, there was such profound ignorance of the Catholic religion, that I cannot illustrate it better than by relating a little incident somewhat foreign to the design of this narrative, but which was one of the real, and never-forgotten incidents of Janet Cowden's life.

There was a picturesque inland village about thirty miles from N——, where the Cowdens were in the habit of spending their summers. Besides its salubrious situation, there were

two of the best private schools there that could be found in the State, which made it particularly desirable on account of the children's not losing time in their education.

There was but one Catholic in this village, the widow of an Irish school-master, who had settled there some years before, and married the sprightly, intelligent daughter of a neighboring farmer, and who was respected in all, by the community, except his religion, which was put in the scales with his being an Irishman, and evenly balanced. He was a first-rate teacher, and that was all they cared about; but when his wife, one of themselves—an American Protestant lady—avowed herself of the same faith as her husband, every man, woman and child in that village felt, individually, aggrieved; she was “dropped from the rolls,” preached at, prayed at, and scoffed at, and finally let alone, as something worse than infidel. But, unmoved by it all, Mrs. W— pursued the even tenor of her way, winning from year to year, by her independence of character and kindness of heart, somewhat on the hearts of her old friends, and going openly and avowedly twice or thrice a year

to Norfolk or Baltimore, to receive the Sacraments of her Church.

In one of these visits to the “North,” as Baltimore was then called, she formed the acquaintance of a beautiful and accomplished young lady, the sister of a Jesuit Father, who was her guardian, and placed her, when quite a child, at the Ursuline Convent, at Boston, to be educated. The vandal and savage bigotry; the last dying spasm of *active* Puritan persecution, laid the beautiful convent in ashes, as all remember, and left its inmates homeless. Our friend found Miss W— at a boarding house, awaiting the coming of her Rev. brother and guardian, and feeling great sympathy for her lonely and exposed position, invited her to return home with her; and as the time of her brother's coming was altogether uncertain, she gratefully accepted, and accompanied Mrs. W— home.

“Don't let it be known that you have lived in a convent, Katie,” said Mrs. W—, as they neared home; “our people are so bigoted, that I fear they'd drum you out of town. They'd feel injured enough to have another Catholic among them.”

Katie laughed and promised, but found herself very comfortable in S—, where her beauty and accomplishments won her admiration and friends in spite of her being a papist.

All went on well until her brother, Father W—, came to visit her. The news flew like wild-fire that a Catholic priest was in the town, and when he appeared in the streets in his long, clerical dress, and a broad-brimmed hat, children ran screaming into the houses, men scowled at him as he passed along, and women held their skirts close to them, and held their breath until he got by. He—innocent of all thought of harm—was on his way one day to see his sister after a long walk, and found himself close to the academy just as both schools poured out some two or three hundred pupils; there was no retreat for him, even had he known the terror he inspired, but such a panic and rout took place as it would be impossible to describe, to get out of his way, until he was left master of the position, alone and solitary in the deserted streets, with hundreds of eyes peering at him through crevices of doors, fences and windows. The next day he took his departure, more amused than angry at the curious

sensation he had caused, and the town's people were as much relieved by his going, as if a pestilence had suddenly ceased among them.

The Catholic seed planted in Janet Cowden's soul in early life, was still alive, although buried under rubbish which, when the right moment came, turned out to be mere "hay and stubble," swiftly consumed, and giving place to the harvests of Faith.

When Janet was in her seventeenth year there fell into her hands, by one of those curious—some call them *chances*, but we prefer to think them providences—we will say curious providences, a little book called "The Papist Represented and Misrepresented," one of those simple works, full of the logic of facts, and the earnest eloquence of truth, which leaves an effect upon the mind as positive as that two and two make four, and carries with it even to the most skeptical soul, a weight of earnestness and truth. It would lengthen this narrative too much to explain how and where she found the book; we will only repeat that it was through a mysterious Providence; but she read it, studied it, pored over it until she knew it by heart. The revelations of that

little book to her soul were like the rising of dawn over the dark, rugged rim of mountain ranges, and although the day lingered behind the shadows, it rose slowly but surely, until at last the full bright beams of the Living Truth shone upon her.

A few months more, and Mr. Cowden with his family, revisited their old home, in --town, and Janet—now eighteen years old—married, very much in opposition to her father's wishes, a Catholic gentleman, of good family and position, whose faith was the only objection that could be urged against him by Mr. Cowden, who said to his wife, when he at last reluctantly consented to the marriage:

"This is one of the last links, wife, of Mary and her old gray beads, and Janet's church-going. Of course the child will turn Romanist—that is inevitable."

But he made Mr. Dare promise that he would not, in any way, or under any circumstances, seek to influence Janet's religious opinion, a promise which Mr. Dare, with more human than Christian chivalry, scrupulously kept. When Janet would ask him questions on articles of Faith, he would simply refer

her to his library, invariably reminding her of his promise, and he having never invited her to accompany him to church, she felt a delicacy in offering to go, but went occasionally to a Protestant church, escorted by her husband to the door, where she found him always waiting for her when the services were over, he having hurried from the Cathedral to meet her. There was no religious confidence between them; she was reticent and shy, and he, all unaware of how every fibre of her soul was stretching out blindly towards the Faith. She found Catholic reading enough in the Dare library, and she read through all, with patient, sad perseverance, that could explain the Dogmas of the Faith, the authority of the Church, the divinity of the Sacraments to her. And she read on, holding her peace for nearly four years, convinced that she must either be a Catholic or an infidel, for there seemed no intermediate place for her between these two extremes, until what with anxiety of mind, and a feebleness of health consequent on the care of two babes, she was brought to the verge of death. Human respect, which had so long held her in thrall, whispering that the world

would say; "she had become a Catholic only because her husband was one;" appealing to her not to pain the heart of a fond father, not to separate from her race and kindred, not to place herself in the power of a religion which demanded constant humiliation, and made human reason subservient to Faith, was suddenly silenced.

In the great peril her soul was in, as strong in her weakness as a giant, and ashamed only of her false shame and cowardice, she bravely asked to see a priest, and with courage only such as the grace of God can only impart, she did all that was required of her, received the Sacraments with great joy and faith, and was now, indeed, in the bonds of that same Faith, indissolubly united to her husband and children by ties which neither life, nor death, nor eternity could sever. The tranquilizing effects of this great step on Janet Dare's mind restored her to health and a new life.

A year or two after this happy event, Mr. Dare received notice of an official appointment under the Government at Washington, and removed his family there shortly after. The Cowdens had returned to Virginia.

As soon as Mrs. Dare's household arrangements were all made, and everything in her new house put in general good order and on a thoroughly comfortable footing, she began to make some inquiries about the family servants; but except a trace here and there, and a scrap of intelligence gleaned from her relatives now and then, she heard nothing. Most of them had gone away either into Maryland or farther north; one or two had died, and as to Mary, she heard nothing of her that was consoling. She disappeared, and every one seemed to think it a good thing that she had

One morning Mrs. Dare was in her dining-room, which was in the basement of the house, attending to some little domestic affairs, when there came a ring at the servant's bell which the cook answered. Mrs. Dare heard a gentle, pleasant voice, speaking in a low tone, then she heard the cook say, not unkindly: "I have nothing for you." Attracted by the voice, which had in it something strangely familiar, Janet Dare stepped to the dining-room door, and asked what the person wanted. The cook stepped aside, and she saw a tall, respectably-dressed colored woman, holding by the hand

a boy about ten years old, whose black satin skin, and great, soft eyes, made as handsome a picture of dusky beauty, Mrs. Dare thought, as she had ever seen. She saw at once that this woman was no common pauper; there was a refinement in her features, a modesty in her brown face, and a tidiness in her clean, patched clothing, and the way it was put on; and above all, something so familiar in the tones of her voice, that she did not attempt to resist the impulse to ask her in, and be seated near the fire. As she passed in, she put out her hand before her, and the boy led her along; then Mrs. Dare saw that she was blind.

"Now, tell me what you want?" said Mrs. Dare, sitting beside her.

"I am hungry, Missis. I haven't had good luck lately selling my work, and the little money I had, I had to pay my room rent with," she replied.

Mrs. Dare made no more inquiries, until a hot breakfast was placed before the woman, of which she and the boy partook as if half-famished; then Mrs. Dare asked her what sort of work she meant.

"I makes quilts, Missis. The boy here he's

my grandchild; he 'sorts the colors and I sews them together. Then sometimes I get coarse sheets to make and the like, from workmen, and the neighbors help me by cutting out; but I does all the sewing part. But work's mighty *scarce* this winter."

The voice and brown face grew more and more familiar, and Mrs. Dare said:

"You have good courage, my friend; and deserve help. What is your name?"

"Keziah, Missis."

"That name is very familiar to me. When I was a child, my mother, Mrs. Cowden, had a servant of that name," said Mrs. Dare.

"I am the very one, Missis; and is you my old Missis' child?" cried the woman, eagerly.

"Yes, I am Janet," replied Mrs. Dare, her eyes filling with tears, as she took the woman's hand and held it close in hers.

"Ah, honey, your mother was the best friend I ever had in all my life. I wanted to go long with you all, but Mar'sr, he 'lowed that the laws of Virginia was mighty hard on free niggers, and wouldn't let us go 'pon that account. And how is they all, honey?"

"All well, and will be so glad to hear of you, Kizzy."

"And so this is little Janet; Missis, let me put my fingers over your face, please," said the woman. Mrs. Dare knelt before her, the mild, sightless countenance looking blankly upon her; and she traced with light touch, every feature, every line, every curve of the fair pale features which was so full of compassion and tenderness for her. "What's the color of your eyes, honey?"

"Gray," replied Mrs. Dare. "What do you make of me, Kizzy?"

"You must be like your father, honey. You hain't got your mother's beauty, but likely enough, likely enough you be with old master's handsome features."

And then followed much talk between the young mistress and the old servant about the reverses, sickness, and blindness of the latter; then Mrs. Dare heard all about Mary at last. She was in Washington.

"Do you ever *see* her?"

"Oh, yes, honey, I *sees* her most every day."

"And is she well?" asked Mrs. Dare, who

felt almost afraid to inquire further; "and how is she getting on?"

"She's well, and a'doing well, and helps me when she can. She lives mighty comfortable—does Mary." Here was news indeed!

"I am delighted to hear this, but tell me all that you know of Mary; I want to hear everything," exclaimed Mrs. Dare, as she stuffed a tart into the little grandson's hand, to quiet his fidgeting.

"Well, you see, Missy, you knew what her failing wor, and she took on mity bad arter you all went Souf. She jest nat'rally gave up everything, and let everything go to the dogs. Ned died, and the boy Dick turned very bad; then her other children died, and maybe 'twas a good thing they did. We all—the family servants—did what we could for her, but 'twas no use; she got wus and wus, 'till at length half her time she was in the P'lice Station, and 'thother half in the Work'us. Bless your life, honey, for one bout she was the life of the town, and the boys would rather seen her out reeling and singing along the wharves, than to see a show; and if you b'lieve me, she stuck that tight to them old gray beads, she sot such

store by, that she'd fight anybody, man or b. /, about them. They was the fust thing she always asked for, and felt for when her spree was over; and bless you, the beads got to be as well known as she. But a turn come for the poor thing, somehow. Nobody could ever make it out, for she was only a poor benighted Romanist—"

"I and my husband and children are Roman Catholics, Kizzy," said Mrs. Dare, gently.

"The Lord sakes, Missy," cried the woman, almost dropping from her chair, "I never did hear the beat of that. The fust of your blood—"

"Never mind that, Kizzy, go on about Mary," said Mrs. Dare kindly, and with an amused smile. "You say a 'good turn came for her—'"

"Yes, Missy, it ra'ally did. All at once she gave up drinking. Nobody b'lieved in it, at fust, but when weeks and months went by, and she never touched a drop, we opened our eyes, and had more faith in her. We thought she'd got religion, but bless you, 'twasn't that, for she used to do nothing but trot, trot, up to the old gray church on the hill, and kneel

down thar on the bare floor, counting them ar beads, until you'd thought it would set her crazy, doing the very same thing over and over again. But it didn't, somehow, and when she couldn't get work to do, we used to help her along.

"But one drefful cold winter—the coldest I ever remember—she could get no work; she was bare of clothes, and had no place of her own to stay in; and Mary, she was sort of proud about living around on us, though the Lord knows, she worked her way wherever she was, and we made no mouf at having her; but she said we had enough to do to feed ourselves, so she sot out one cold, freezing day, to go to the city to look for work. She hadn't a thing on, but an old cotton cloth dress, and a thin old petticoat, with a ragged old shawl wrapped around her head; and shoes, honey, so full of holes, that she might be said to have none. But she got no work. Nobody wanted such a starved-looking scarecrow as that about their house; and night comed on freezing cold; she was hungry and hardly able to stand, she was cold and empty; but she kept walking, staggering like, when a man run again her with

a big basket, and knocked her right over; and who in the name of God, Missy, do you think it was?"

"Who?" asked Mrs. Dare, deeply interested.

"Burgess! You 'members Burgess, Miss Janet?" Yes, Mrs. Dare well remembered "the old negro gentleman of the olden time."

"Well you knows, Missy, Burgess was a mighty pompous old fool, but he was good-hearted—was Burgess—and when he picked up the poor cretur that his basket upsot, and saw it was Mary, he tuk her right home, and told her if she'd give over her drunken ways, she might stay thar 'till she got a good home, and cook for him, and take care of his house and things; for you see, honey, he was never married, for the reason that he didn't think there was a living nigger good enough for him. Then, Mary ups and tells him that she had give up her bad ways, with the help of God, long ago, if he meant drinking, for she hadn't tasted a drop of anything for mor'n a year, and never intended to again. Then he asked her where them old gray beads wur that she used to make such a bother about? and bless you, Missy, she hauled 'em out of her bosom,

and told him right up and down that them ar beads had kept her out of hell, and if he didn't like 'em, she would go away, and she would, too; she'd gone right out into the freezing night rather than stay where her old beads wasn't welcome. But he told her he didn't care nothing about her beads, that she might hang 'em on her nose, and pray on them all day, he wouldn't interfere with 'em; he only wanted her to do right. Then she staid; and I'll tell you what, Missy, he ra'ally give her decent, warm clothes, and she looked like a respectable woman. She kept Burgess' house like a band-box, and what with his pigs, his poultry, his little garden full of vegetables, and Mary's good cooking, they had high livin'. And then Burgess, he took to goin' to church, and turned Catholic; and it's a wonder to many how well Mary got on. But the funny part, Miss Janet, is to be told. You know what foolish notions Burgess had; well he takes it into his head one day, that it wasn't proper for him and Mary to be living together in the same house, even in that respectable sort of a way, and he told her right off that

she must marry him, or go away ; so she married him."

"Burgess and Mary married!" exclaimed Janet Dare, laughing until tears ran down her cheeks, "it seems the strangest thing I ever heard of."

"Yes, indeed, Missy!" continued Kizzy, "and Father Matthews married them. He told them first, that they'd better both be thinking of their graves and the judgment, than getting married; then he give them his blessing, and told them to make up for their foolishness by coming to Mass regularly and tending to their duties; and bless you, honey, they does, I b'lieve they's both strivin' for the kingdom, and I b'lieve they'll both get safe to Zion."

Mrs. Dare was delighted to learn all that Kizzy had told her; and told her to come or send every day, as long as she lived, for her breakfast and dinner, and any little thing she might need, and bade her see Mary that day, if possible, and send her to her.

We will not describe the meeting between Mary and the young mistress, or Mary's joy

when she learned that Mrs. Dare and her family were Catholics.

"I never 'spected to live to see it, honey, but I said many a prayer on my beads for it," she said gravely and decorously. In appearance, Mary was unaltered, she did not look a day older than when Janet Dare saw her years before. There was the same cream and coffee complexion; the same broad, ugly nose, the same homely mouth, the same twinkling, bead-like eyes, and the two little tufts of wool pulled out from under her bandanna turban, over each eye-brow; but there was a great gravity, a restlessness, and an unobtrusive gentle humility about her, that Mrs. Dare almost thought beautified her homely aspect, and she could scarcely refrain from folding her arms about her, and kissing her brown cheek.

"I have been a great sinner, Missy," she said, and it was all that she did say then of herself; "and our Lord and the Blessed Virgin's been mighty good to me." * * *

We must conclude this, perhaps, wearisome narrative, lest our patient readers get utterly weary. Mary still lives, widowed again, and poor, for Burgess met with losses which broke

his poor, old gentlemanly heart; but she lives like one waiting to be called at any moment; willing to live or die, asking "neither poverty nor riches," blessing with rich blessings those who aid her, and often giving good counsel to one, who in ease and comfort, complains oftentimes of the hard ways of Providence; and reminds her in her grave, gentle way, "that Christians can't expect to get to heaven, except by the way of the cross. That was the way our Saviour and his Blessed Mother went, and we is no better than them, honey, and must follow the same road." Her conversation is full of such sentences; one would suppose her acquainted with every page of the Imitation of Christ, but it is doubtful, as she cannot read, if she ever heard of it. Steadily she holds her well-trimmed burning lamp in her feeble hand, steadily she clings to her old gray rosary, as a child to the hand of its mother in some dark and lonely wild, fervently she repeats her "Hail Mary," morning, noon and night, and in the deep night watches, for she hopes some time or other to hear the voice of her Blessed Mary, say:

"Arise, the bridegroom cometh, come away

with me, poor exile who have been so faithful to me, let me lead you to my Son, my beloved, who will reward you with peace eternal."

And hoping thus, a sweet serenity crowns the old negro's age, which nothing disturbs; she lives a hidden life with God, which but a few know of, and of which she does not talk, through very humility, but which we know by its fruits of patience, faith, hope, charity, humility, fortitude and meekness.

THE END.