

Passing through the farther end of Bevenville you will see an old house, where the Deist lived. I saw it the last time I drove past and smiled betwixt remorse and amusement as I recalled the accusations heaped upon him in thought. He stepped over graves to the horror of us children, though the fact that we ate wild strawberries from the same mounds gave our placid consciences not a twinge; at burials and prayers he did not remove his hat, but with upright head stood apart, he never but once entered a church, and that once is the cause of this story.

He had been an abolitionist in days when abolitionists were unpopular, which not only marked him as different from other men, but brought down upon his controversial head the anathemas of his neighbors. He signified his attachment to this cause by freeing his three slaves two women and an elderly man, and by this act bred distrust in their contented minds, for they promptly hired themselves out to a less peculiar master.

Peculiar that, I think, was the basis of his faults in our eyes. He had buried his wife close beside the house under an apple tree; buried her, so report said, in silence or accompanied only by the tears of the two young children. This was the occasion, I believe, that earned him the title of "Deist."

"Kilbourne's a Deist. Only Deists and such like bury their dead in that way," declared the Authority, a retired colonel at Bevenville.

A youth who had been busy with his books, ventured to suggest that the name "Deist" as ordinarily used, belonged rather to a school of writers of last century who had aimed at establishing natural religion.

"Tut, tut, don't tell me," said the Authority, irritably. "When I say Deist, I know what I mean."

Another occurrence later strengthened this reputation. The story ran that a missionary, seeking a place to build a chapel for the negroes, approached the Deist with a view of purchasing a certain piece of land of his.

"No, sir," said the Deist. "These are the words of the village Authority as we all sit listening. 'No, sir, I can entertain no such proposal, nor furnish any land for that purpose.'"

"But, surely, sir," the missionary urged, "with your principles you believe that the negro should be guided by religion."

"Nature, more nature, is what he wants," the other replied. "It was because nature abhors slavery that I set my slaves free, though I might have saved myself the trouble by the way things have turned out. No, sir, no churches on my land, if you please."

"Now," added the Authority, dropping into his own character and pulling at his pipe, "if that wasn't deism pure and simple, and rank, I would like to know what is?"

So Deist he remained, a name suggesting mysterious possibilities of terror to his children.

The years went by, the house grew older and greyer (it was one of Kilbourne's peculiarities not to paint his buildings, a tenet of Deism I think we believed), his daughter married and went away, leaving him to his loneliness, and the man himself grew older and changed, although to us he seemed always the same, upright and tall. Even yet I can see in memory his massive head with his slightly sunken temples and large eyes deeply hollowed, his thin facial outline, at once gentle and strong in its mingled expression of endurance and calm.

But within the man himself there was another and bewildering atmosphere; all that eager, arguing, dogmatic mind which had taken such a vital interest in things without, was by a strange turn absorbed in yearning, yearning for what he did not know. Often waking from the brief sleep of the aged, he was conscious that it was almost within his grasp that there was a whisper at his ear only just withholding the word. Sometimes it was a great desire for worship, high pomp of ceremonial with solemn music such as his ears had never heard; often, however, a desire for something, some one perhaps, to come to him. Nature, which had always been for him beneficent and kindly nature, which, as he had felt as a solace, would ever proceed tranquilly and orderly whatever the mistake of men, was taking on for him a cruel aspect. There was a sense of difficulty and meaninglessness in the never ending working of birth, obscure life, and

desolate thought that quickened in his mind this February morning as he awoke in the accustomed manner long before day.

The world was turning on its dim way towards Spring. The little clusters on the maple twigs close outside the windows were already swelling and red, although it would be a full month before the slim branches would flame out into scarlet; in the orchards, too, at the back of the house, the young trees had smooth greenish tints, and were tipped with fuzzy, ash-colored buds; in the sheltered gulches the grass was freshening and growing vivid and tender, but to the old man in the silence of the old house everything seemed lifeless and without hope.

His lamp, where he had placed it on the table, burned with a languid light and cast faint shadows upwards lengthening the silhouette and "daguerreotype" frames into vapory ellipses and ovals. The fire crumbled and blackened the logs slowly and unwillingly, tired with the night's vigil and with none of the blithe, snapping blaze of the newly kindled morning flame.

Kilbourne moved about uneasily. He could neither vent nor allude the cry within; he was no book lover and could not turn to them for solace, that he had always found outside in the air, in the fields, in the sunshine. Now his window panes revealed only the dark void without; his chilled heart found nothing to dwell upon but the thought of his wife's grave below under the apple tree. He had not thought of her with such a pang for years (her memory had grown quiet and mossed as the boughs above her), and he walked to the table, with a hasty step.

He took up the lamp and went with it from room to room; the light revealed desolate walls and floors with here and there a piece of furniture starting into boldness as the passing gleam touched it. He entered his own apartment and again put the lamp upon the table. Filled at one corner were odds and ends he had collected from his daughters' rooms after they had gone away, a handkerchief, a few childish drawings, a photograph or so of a self-confident young face, some letters, but these he pushed away to find beneath a page cut evidently from a book. A page containing a group of weeping women beside a motionless figure, stretched upon a slab, whose strength had drawn him to gaze against his will until it had grown a thing beloved. He knew the heavy figure stricken with death, sculptured, if one might say so, upon the paper, the hands and the feet pierced. No need to read the three printed words below, "The Dead Christ." And the women beside him, surely they were faces he knew, so human, so sorrow-possessed. There was no beauty in them save the beauty of truth and a hint of divine hope beneath the grief. He would not have looked twice at the picture, perhaps, in his careless youth, but in his youth he had not known of this inner need, a need the picture both awakened and satisfied, so truly had the old Mantuan limned. It was the very rustic, sculptural simplicity that appealed to him, and the human element led him to seek the saving.

"So He must really have looked when He came down among us," he said suddenly and aloud. Then abashed, with a new rush of feeling upon him, he dropped the picture and bent his head down upon his hands. So this was his need! A Saviour! that idea he had put away so long ago as worn out! An old, common, unproved hope! A Saviour?

"Yea! and that Saviour!" with the affirmation upon his lips, he rose trembling to seek the outer air, the old habits asserting themselves even in this strange, new revelation.

His hands shook as he extinguished his lamp, and with his heavy outer coat upon him, he groped his way down stairs. The shrunken, dried timbers creaked under his tread, the banister grunted beneath the weight of his hand; in the dusk the house seemed alive with presences. Below in the hall he found his lantern ready to his hand and lighting it he went towards the door, his footsteps echoing along the empty passage and his light casting tremulous shadows of himself over the faintly illuminated ceiling and wall.

The whinny of his horse, the grateful, familiar animal presence, quieted him a little. Presently the regular motion in the saddle soothed him more, as did the crisp freshness of the early morning. During the monotonous ride through the glimmering atmosphere with that feeling of new hand peace in his mind Kilbourne, as he rode, was

preparing for some long journey, perhaps was already on his way.

The wan dawn may have been the cause, bringing into sight the swells of plain or slight fringes of wood and diffusing abroad a soft, yellowish grey light under which the land appeared ancient, wide-spreading and vast. Yet surely that could not be the sun there on the horizon, coppery and vivid. Kilbourne raised himself in his stirrups peering. It was a fire, clearly now a fire. But where was the blaze? what village? what house? He looked about him bewildered, but could catch no land mark. His horse, too, was staring at the crimson light, holding his ears erect and staring uneasily. He urged the animal into a gallop, every minute bringing them nearer the fire, whose red light revealed intimately every fence and stone and tall cedar shape by the road side.

Ah, he knew the place now, a church standing in the midst of fields. The very church he had refused to have on his own lands, which he had seen more than once during these years, remembering its tidy spire and dominant cross.

When he drew rein he saw that the building was beyond aid, nor indeed was there anyone to aid. A few distracted negroes who had run out of their cabins, hovered about; a man flinging water now and then at the triumphant flames. Kilbourne dismounted from the aching horse and hurried towards the group.

"Why don't you all lend a hand!" he shouted. "Don't stand there staring. If there's anything in the place to be saved, get to work and save it."

"Dead, ma'am, 'tain't no use," was the answer. "We've got all we can do to keep de pastor 'um gwine in."

"Your pastor? where is he?"

"Right back hyah sub. En he's bound to go."

They led the way to the back of the building, fighting the thick white smoke. The heat was crackling the glass of the windows; every minute a piece fell splintering to the ground, and a flame thrust its red tongue through the aperture. At the wall more men were drawing water and drenching the wall of the extension of a house near by. Two negroes were each holding the arm of a slender man in black. The scarlet light fell on his delicate face and revealed its ardent lines.

"No, sah, we aint a-gwine to let you go. His rank pion to put you 'hind in dat do'." This was half in expostulation to the prisoner, half to Kilbourne's question.

"Leave me alone, men. I must go, I tell you." And he wrenched one arm from the horny black hand grasping it.

"You couldn't live a moment in that heat and smoke," said Kilbourne. The first breath would scorch your lungs."

The young man glanced at him. "The fire has not yet reached the altar. I must go," he repeated and struggled to free his other arm. The two negroes resigned the responsibility to Kilbourne and contended themselves with expostulating.

"Don't you go, sah, don't you go, Father Preston!"

The priest advanced to the doorway.

"You shall not go in!" Kilbourne exclaimed, placing himself in the way. "You will die, and there can be nothing in there as precious as a human life."

"The Blessed Sacrament is there," the other answered steadily. "The Body of our Lord."

Kilbourne stood still; his hands fell at his sides; something in the words, the tone, the glance of the clear eyes held him. He saw the blonde head of the young man bright in the reddish gleam, he saw the tall figure vanish in the rolling smoke before he could move; then, seized with the rage of divine curiosity and longing, he too, sprang forward and groped his way through the smoke-filled place.

How he guided himself he never knew. Gasping, grimed, parched, yet damp with the cold sweat of difficult resolve, he found himself at the foot of an altar bathed in the appalling crimson flood of destruction. The candles, twisted and limp, hung waiting over the rim of their bright holders; a door somewhere stood open and in front of it swayed the black clad figure he had followed. But Kilbourne saw now only the great cross that stood overhead, clear against the blackened wood. The figure on it was neither agonized nor suffering; to the old man as the warring flames swept over it it seemed to stand over a bank of snow, serene and calm.

holding up his hands, broke out into the old cry of acknowledgement and confession.

"My Lord and my God!"

The next moment the young man reeled blindly down upon him and together, the old man with marvellous strength supporting him in his arms and covering his face from the flames, the young priest half-stiffed, clinging with his precious burden to the other, they fought their path through the fire until fresh, dewy, morning air was found.

Kilbourne had undergone his baptism of fire. He had sacrificed his life, but he did not die at once. He lingered long enough in the parsonage to feel the cooling touch of the water of regeneration and to hear from the lips of the man he had saved the last affecting charge: "Go forth, O Christian soul from this world. May thy place be this day in peace and thy abode in Holy Zion."

PRaise FOR THE UNSUBSINE.

We have received the subscribed letters from the Ursuline Convent, of Tiffin. They were originally addressed to the Ursulines of New York whose popular academy was the first female seminary for learning established within the present limits of the United States, its foundation dating back to 1757. Since the establishment of the Order in 1852, the Ursulines have everywhere been the pioneers of higher education of females, nor have they been less generous in the missionary field, particularly in America, whether they came as early as 1839, to aid in civilizing and Christianizing the aborigines, a work which they continue to this day among the western Indians. These letters are but a few of the many proofs we possess of the esteem in which the fathers of our glorious republic held our Catholic schools, and of their appreciation of our self-sacrificing efforts in the cause of education. Would that some of our so-called "patriots" of the present had inherited more of their magnanimity!

Washington, May 15, 1864.

To the Sister Theresa de St. Xavier Farjon, Superiora, and to the Nuns of the Order of St. Ursula at New Orleans.

I have received, Holy Sisters, the letter you have written me, wherein you express anxiety for the property invested in your institution by the former governments of Louisiana. The principles of the constitution and government of the United States are a sure guarantee that it will be preserved to you, sacred and inviolate, and that your institution will be permitted to govern itself according to its own voluntary rules, without any interference from the civil authority.

"Whatever diversity of shade may appear in the religious opinions of our fellow-citizens, the charitable objects of your institution cannot be indifferent to any; and its furtherance of the wholesome purpose of society, by training up its younger members in the way they should go, cannot fail to insure it the patronage of the government if it under. Be assured it will meet with all the protection which our office can give it."

I salute you, Holy Sisters, with friendship and respect.

Thomas Jefferson.

Washington, April 26th, 1864.

Madam:—I have received your letter of the 11th of March with the sentiments due for respect and confidence which it expresses on the part of the pious Institution which you superintend.

In a country where all rights religious as well as civil, are protected by the laws, and guaranteed by an enlightened public opinion, the best of securities exist for the tranquility and success of those whose labors are devoted to the conscientious pursuit of laudable objects.

Therefore, it only remains to assure you that, however anxious to my predecessor it may seem, my dispositions are equally friendly to the task of training youth in the paths of virtue and useful knowledge; and that, with my thanks for the prayers for which I am indebted to the piety of your religious community, I offer mine for the happiness of the members composing it.

James Madison.

To the Ursulines, we shall have the liberty of adding a letter, received some years later from Hon. J. Dawson, together with a passage from the address in 1839, to President Monroe by Hon. E. M. Bruce.

General Jackson always proved himself a devoted friend to the Ursulines, and after the death of

himself for the general good, and offered to receive the Ursulines in the American army; and the only testimony of his high appreciation of the charity and devotedness with which they received and tended the sick and wounded. Later on, during his presidency, he made it his duty to revisit the community.

"Much respected Ladies:—Your memorial to the Congress of the United States, having been referred to a select committee, of which I had the honor to be chairman, I paid to it all the attention which it merited; and I have much pleasure in informing you that a law has been passed in compliance with your wishes, of which I enclose to your friend, Governor Claiborne."

"I sincerely hope that this change may promote the interest of that Seminary over which you, with so much propriety, preside; and that, while you continue to engrain on the youthful mind the principles of virtue, industry, and useful knowledge, you may receive not only the fostering care of your country, but the protection of that Divinity who is the author of all good."

"Accept the assurance of my high respect and best wishes."

J. Dawson.

(Extract from Hon. E. M. Bruce's letter to President Monroe.)

"The Convent in New Orleans is highly interesting to the old inhabitants of Louisiana, as the school where all the young ladies of the best families are educated, and I most cordially endorse them in a most valuable institution. The importance of the institution in this respect, when we take into consideration the habits and the character of the people of that country, is much greater than might be at first supposed. All who are acquainted with the ladies of Louisiana educated in this Seminary, speak in its praise, and I assure you, sir, that a deep interest is felt in that country among a class of people the least presuming and unobtrusive; whatever concerns their education, and any indulgence which can be granted them, consistently with national interest, will be received with a grateful and anxious eye, and be general."

"I am, with high respect,

Your most obedient servant,

E. M. Bruce.

What the Spirit Did.

Canon Farrar, a well-known divine, in his book, "Saintly Writings," writes:

"What was it that had produced the best elements of Christianity in the fourth century? The influence of the hermits. What was it that saved the principles of law and order and civilization? What rescued the wreck of ancient literature from the universal conflagration? What restrained, what converted the rushing Tiber into a stream? What kept alive the dying embers of art? What was the spirit which, in the face of the most cruel persecutions, encouraged the most widely-spread and the most universal charity, the most universal and the most universal charity?"

What was it that had produced the best elements of Christianity in the fourth century? The influence of the hermits. What was it that saved the principles of law and order and civilization? What rescued the wreck of ancient literature from the universal conflagration? What restrained, what converted the rushing Tiber into a stream? What kept alive the dying embers of art? What was the spirit which, in the face of the most cruel persecutions, encouraged the most widely-spread and the most universal charity, the most universal and the most universal charity?"

What was it that had produced the best elements of Christianity in the fourth century? The influence of the hermits. What was it that saved the principles of law and order and civilization? What rescued the wreck of ancient literature from the universal conflagration? What restrained, what converted the rushing Tiber into a stream? What kept alive the dying embers of art? What was the spirit which, in the face of the most cruel persecutions, encouraged the most widely-spread and the most universal charity, the most universal and the most universal charity?"

What was it that had produced the best elements of Christianity in the fourth century? The influence of the hermits. What was it that saved the principles of law and order and civilization? What rescued the wreck of ancient literature from the universal conflagration? What restrained, what converted the rushing Tiber into a stream? What kept alive the dying embers of art? What was the spirit which, in the face of the most cruel persecutions, encouraged the most widely-spread and the most universal charity, the most universal and the most universal charity?"

What was it that had produced the best elements of Christianity in the fourth century? The influence of the hermits. What was it that saved the principles of law and order and civilization? What rescued the wreck of ancient literature from the universal conflagration? What restrained, what converted the rushing Tiber into a stream? What kept alive the dying embers of art? What was the spirit which, in the face of the most cruel persecutions, encouraged the most widely-spread and the most universal charity, the most universal and the most universal charity?"

What was it that had produced the best elements of Christianity in the fourth century? The influence of the hermits. What was it that saved the principles of law and order and civilization? What rescued the wreck of ancient literature from the universal conflagration? What restrained, what converted the rushing Tiber into a stream? What kept alive the dying embers of art? What was the spirit which, in the face of the most cruel persecutions, encouraged the most widely-spread and the most universal charity, the most universal and the most universal charity?"

What was it that had produced the best elements of Christianity in the fourth century? The influence of the hermits. What was it that saved the principles of law and order and civilization? What rescued the wreck of ancient literature from the universal conflagration? What restrained, what converted the rushing Tiber into a stream? What kept alive the dying embers of art? What was the spirit which, in the face of the most cruel persecutions, encouraged the most widely-spread and the most universal charity, the most universal and the most universal charity?"