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## Through Thorny Paths.

BY MARY ROWENA COTTER.

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(Continued from last week.)

### PART FIRST. CHAPTER III.

Charlie secured a position as delivery boy in a grocery and worked hard, so that he soon won the esteem of the firm. But like his father he was destined to fall into bad company. In less than three years a large sum of money was taken from the store and suspicion fell upon the boy. Instead of waiting to prove his innocence, he was prepared to run away, when his mother was informed of the theft. To her he strongly denied all knowledge of it, but refused to answer any question put to him by the head of the firm. In silence he left the room, and when his mother went to look for him he could not be found and had never since been heard from. Who the real thief was could never be proved, so suspicion still rested upon him.

This was another blow to the already broken-hearted woman, and her health failed rapidly now. Notwithstanding, she continued giving private lessons in French almost to the end of her life. The kind Sisters, whose school her daughters attended, had assisted her much in getting pupils. Nellie, having secured a position as correspondent for a large firm, who allowed her to do much of her work at home, left school, much to the regret of her mother, whose heart was set upon seeing her children well educated but it was agreed between them that Cecelia was not, under any conditions whatever, to give up until she had graduated. In less than a year after Charlie's departure Mrs. O'Kane was dead and the two orphans were left to face the world alone. The disgrace their brother had brought upon them still hung over them. Eager to be away from those who knew them, they changed their residence, taking two small rooms in a secluded suburb of the city. Here Cecelia entered another school as good as the first one she had left, while Nellie continued her work. By constant labor which often lasted far into the night Nellie managed to earn a comfortable livelihood for herself and her sister.

Cecelia knew in part the sacrifice her sister was making for her, and she was resolved to pay her back in full when she was able to earn something herself. For this reason she applied herself most attentively to her studies in school and expected to finish a year earlier than those who had entered with her.

Between the two sisters the greatest love and confidence had always existed, especially since they had been left alone, and now deep in her heart Nellie felt a little hurt that her Cecelia should think of trying, without her knowledge, to secure a position which would separate them.

### CHAPTER IV.

For nearly twenty years Agnes Daton had slept in the family vault, and for twelve years her husband had rested at her side, but little Edward, the babe she hoped to take with her, still lived; a brilliant young man he was now, and none who had known her could deny that he was her son. He had grown up like her in everything, and not a trace of the blood could be found either in his looks or his noble character, excepting that, like his father in youth, he cared little for the vain flatteries of the gay one of his sphere. There was only one person whom it could be said he truly loved and that was his stepmother, who, never having had a child of her own, had from the very first lavished upon the son of her predecessor all the affection of which her proud, worldly heart was capable. When after six years of happy wedded life, during which she had reigned as a queen of society, entertaining a great deal on a grand style, she had suddenly found herself a widow, she had closed the house for a period of two years, seeking consolation for her loss only in the company of him whom she called her own little son. The only fault she could find in the boy was his lack of what she called proper pride, but she hoped that when he went away to college he might learn to overcome it.

Little Edward was the only companion Mrs. Daton wanted in the years of her widowhood, but when he had left her for school she began to look about for some young lady of

refinement and culture who could fill his place. But this was not so easy as she had anticipated. There were plenty ready for the position, which would pay the right one well, but Mrs. Daton had poor luck, and she had been without a companion for several months when she thought of trying an advertisement in the daily paper. It was this Cecelia had read and answered.

The young girl's beauty and bright, winning ways had attracted the woman at once and from the very beginning she was fully resolved to engage her; but she would try her a little first, so as to hide her admiration. Long after she had dismissed her she sat thinking of the pretty face and the sweet young voice which had read French as well as if it had been her native tongue. Two more applicants for the position came that afternoon, only to be hastily dismissed. When on the following day Cecelia was announced again Mrs. Daton met her with a smiling face, which fully won the girl's heart.

"I suppose," said the woman, after kindly greeting her, "that you are ready to come to live with me any time now?"

"I am sorry, Mrs. Daton, but I had decided to remain in school."

"And not accept the good position I have offered you? Certainly you cannot be so foolish."

"I appreciate your kindness, Mrs. Daton, but both my sister and myself, promised mother that I should not leave school until I had finished, and my sister insists upon keeping the promise."

"It would be a wise thing for you to do so if your support depended upon your education, dear, and your mother probably had that in mind when she told you to remain in school, but since you have so good an offer, it would be foolish of you not to accept it."

"Perhaps you are right, but it is hard under any circumstances to break a promise to my dear mother, especially as sister wishes me to keep it."

After much persuasion Cecelia was at last fully conquered, and it was decided that she was to come to Innisfallen as soon as school closed, which would be in two weeks. Mrs. Daton was elated over her good luck, and she had eued to write to her son to tell him about the bright young companion she had at last secured. When she was writing she did not realize that Edward was no longer a boy, though still in school, and it was well for her peace of mind that she could not see his face as he read her letter. Perhaps if she had she would not have been so anxious to have brought Cecelia to her home. The young man had no thoughts whatever of falling in love with the girl, but when he remembered some of the middle-aged and far from handsome maidens his mother had kept for companions, he was eager to see the dark-eyed beauty whom she had so glowing described. He hoped that he would find her more congenial companionship than he had in the others.

When Nellie learned her sister's decision, she used every means in her power to keep her with her, but Cecelia was determined now to go, and go she did, in spite of all that was said to the contrary. So the day after school closed Nellie found herself alone. Cecelia having entered upon her new work.

Nellie could not keep back the tears at parting, but Cecelia, tried to cheer her by assuring her that she would not be far from her and she would call to see her often. She said that she expected to have her calls returned. In this Cecelia had been deceived, for as a paid companion she seldom found an opportunity to leave her mistress long enough to go home, and soon learned that Mrs. Daton did not wish her to be troubled with calls from her sister. In her heart the girl rebelled a little at first, but when she compared Innisfallen to her poor little rooms and also thought of the long pleasant rides in the Daton carriage as well as many other pleasant excursions such as she never before dreamed of, she could not think of giving up her position. At first, in a real fit of home sickness, she promised Nellie that she would return to school in the fall, but before that time a European trip was planned, and Nellie truly felt now that her sister

was lost to her forever.

The sojourn abroad lasted over a year. At first Cecelia's letters were long and frequent and contained many interesting descriptions of places visited, especially the churches, in which Nellie was always interested, but after a time letter writing, especially as she had much to do for her mistress, became tiresome, and Nellie keenly felt the loss of this one connecting link with the dear absent one. When the travelers returned, Cecelia profited by the first opportunity to visit her sister, and was allowed to spend a whole Sunday with her. The girls had much to talk about, and both would have been very happy but for the plainly visible change of the younger. She did not realize it herself, but her naturally proud spirit had developed until she was already putting on a haughty, affected air which Nellie did not like. From the neat but simple style of apparel she had worn, she now dressed as a lady of wealth and fashion. This latter had been the work of Mrs. Daton who left nothing undone to show off the beauty of the girl, who among strangers often passed as a daughter rather than a hired companion of the women.

In one regard Mrs. Daton had failed to effect any perceptible change in the young girl. In spite of the many petty remarks thrown out by a mistress who had no fixed belief of her own, Cecelia had remained steadfast to her faith. Many times on Sunday when her freedom would not have allowed her later in the day she had arisen and gone to an early Mass, so as to be back in time to breakfast with the family. Her faith had been strengthened by her visits to the churches of the Old World, to which her mistress, led by motives of pure curiosity, had accompanied her. Her devotions on these occasions had given the women the belief that Cecelia was really sincere, and to the girl's own satisfaction she often found her mistress more amiable after these visits.

The animated interest with which Cecelia called Mrs. Daton's attention to the paintings and statuary, bringing out many marks of beauty which she herself had failed to notice, always pleased her, but further she had no love for the Catholic religion, and often regretted that one so beautiful and talented should adhere to it.

Three months before their return they were joined by Edward, who had graduated, and life for the two ladies had become much more pleasant in his congenial companionship; but, strange to say, the elder lady was for a long time wholly blind to the fact that she was not the chief object of her stepson's interest. Cecelia herself innocent child she was, though the many little kind attentions shown her were only marks of respect he owed his mother's companion. The youth secretly rejoiced that his love for the fair girl was as yet known only to himself, and he often smiled when he tried to imagine what the proud mistress of Innisfallen would say when he informed her that her servant was to be made her equal.

For from the beginning of his acquaintances with Cecelia he had felt that she was the only one who could make his home happy. He did not like to see her kept in her present capacity, neither did he wish to have her leave the house, for fear of losing her, and for this reason he intended to marry her soon. His only regret was that she was not two or three years older, for she still seemed much like a child.

Mrs. Daton was stunned, almost horrified, when, about eight months after their arrival home, Edward, having won from Cecelia a promise to become his wife, announced his intentions to his mother. As soon as she had recovered from the shock she laughed at him and asked him if he were really going crazy, to which he replied:

"Not in the least, mother; I think I have made a wise choice."

She talked with him and tried to reason with him, but it was of no avail. Then she spoke to Cecelia, but the little maiden, who had been warned by her lover to keep silent, listened with due respect, but would have nothing to say. She would have been discharged, but her mistress dared not incur the displeasure of him who had inherited not only his father's iron will, but the grand home she had called her own for nineteen years.

"I never thought he would do such a thing," was her cold mental comment; "but how could I expect anything different when his father did as badly in his youth, and if he is the son of a millionaire, he is also the son of a poor Irish girl."

Mrs. Daton when she saw that opposition on her part could do nothing to prevent so unequal a match, wisely made the best of the affair, hoping that time would change the mind of the wilful youth. But she was soon informed that the marriage was not to be delayed. All went well again for awhile and it was not long before she was called upon to help make preparations for the affair, which, on account of the brides position, Edward dared should very quiet. It would be soon enough after their return from their honeymoon to present his wife in the circles in which she was to move. Then one serious objection arose. Edward expressed his intention of having a priest marry him at home but Mrs. Daton emphatically declared that no Romish priest should come into her house.

"Have you forgotten, mother," he said, "that I am of age and that this is my home, where I intend to do as I please?"

He would have conquered had not Cecelia overheard the objection and insisted upon being married at the priest's house.

On her eighteenth birthday, in presence of only Nellie and one of Edward's most intimate friends, they were married. Nellie was prevailed upon to spend the evening at the mansion, where a few intimate friends of the family had assembled and she accompanied the bride and groom to an late train, in which they embarked for a short Western trip.

"Poor little Cecelia," she sighed, after bidding her a tearful good-bye, "she is lost to me forever now, and I have no one left. Poor, dear mother, what would she say if she were here to see her now?"

Only the memory of Cecelia's bright, happy smile cheered her, and she thought after weeping for an hour in her lonely room: "She never was like the rest of us, for she seemed to be born to be a grand lady and a old never have been happy in poverty, but it would have been easier to have given her up to one of her own faith."

Had Nellie known that her sister had indeed married a Catholic who had received the old nuptial waters of holy baptism in infancy, she, with the co-operation of the bride, would have left nothing undone to bring the groom to the practice of his own religion; but the fact that his mother had been a Catholic, as well as the scene in which the young priest had played part in her death chamber, was a secret that had been hidden in the family vault. Mr. Daton had never revealed the first, which he considered no small disgrace, even to his second wife, and as for the second, Father Conlin had carried away with him and had never been heard from since.

Cecelia in the meantime thought of only two things: that she had won a most loving husband and that her dream had come true and she was mistress of Innisfallen. Had she tried before her marriage to have won him to her faith it might not have been a very difficult task, or even during the happy days of their honeymoon she might have converted him, but she did not believe in such things. Her own faith was strong enough, she felt that if he became a Catholic now it might be only to please her, while perhaps he did not fully believe in the religion. She thought it would be time enough after they were married and settled in life, then she would try upon him the effects of good example.

Alas for such vain hopes; the golden opportunity of the first few days of true love passed so soon. Although their married life continued to be a happy one, each found individual cares after they were settled in their home so that Cecelia, while she still clung to her church, never mentioned her religion to her husband until she spoke to him of having her first child baptized, to which he readily consented, simply because he had too high a sense of honor to break the promise made at the marriage.

(To be continued.)

### WEEKLY CHURCH CALENDAR.

Sunday—February 23—Gospel, St. Mark, xvi, 1-8. St. Peter Damian, bishop, confessor and doctor.  
Monday 24—St. Matthias, apostle.  
Tuesday 25—St. Valentine, virgin and abbess.  
Wednesday 26—St. Alexander, patriarch and confessor.  
Thursday 27—St. Leander, bishop and confessor.  
Friday 28—The Spear and Nails. Fast.  
Saturday March 1—St. Symplicius, pope and confessor.

### THE FORTY HOURS.

The Forty Hours will be held this month at the following places:  
February 18th. First Sunday in Lent. Holy Family, Auburn; Goodville, Clyde.  
February 22d. Rochester; Amherst.

## POPE LEO ENTERS ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH YEAR OF HIS PONTIFICATE.



HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIII.

Rome, Feb. 20.—The Pope entered on his twenty-fifth year of pontificate to-day. Although the main celebration of the jubilee was marked by the singing of a Te Deum in St. Peter's.

The Pontiff, who was the recipient of many congratulations, to one well-wisher that his jubilee was long and happy.

Count Giuse, the minister of public works, has approved of the divorce bill, which the church has opposed.

The Pope received innumerable telegrams of congratulation. Number came from France, Austria and Bavaria. Eighty-four messages from America seventy messages from Italy.



### Five Minute Sermon.

#### TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

It is generally believed that the wonderful event spoken of in to-day's Gospel took place on Mount Thabor, which is near the town of Nazareth, in the tribe of Zabulon between the Mediterranean Sea and the Lake of Genesareth. From its summit one can see almost the whole of Palestine: to the east the River Jordan and the country beyond; to the south, the tribes of Issachar and Manasse; to the west, the Mediterranean Sea; and to the north, a sweep of land reaching to the mountains of Lebanon.

Christ wished it, His transfiguration, to take place on a mountain, and in a solitary place, to give us to understand that divine favors are reserved for those who, by their virtues, raise themselves above all things earthly, who retire into solitude and flee from the distractions and cares of the world.

New St. Peter represents those who are steadfast in their faith. St. James those who control their passions. St. John the chaste and pure. Hence Jesus selected them to enjoy so great a privilege in order that we might hope to receive His special favors if we are firm in our faith like St. Peter if we overcome our passions like St. James, and if we are pure in mind and body like St. John.

Christ manifested Himself in His glory to these apostles for several reasons. First, by giving them a manifestation of the glory which was His own and which was not hidden by the veil of humanity. He gave them a visible proof of His divinity. Moreover, He did so to strengthen them and sustain their faith when they would later on see Him in humiliation and suffering. Lastly, He was transfigured before them to encourage them and all future Christians to suffer voluntarily the trials to the apostleship and observe the law by permitting them to see a glimpse of that consolation which they will enjoy in the vision of God, which is the reward of all that love and obey Him here on earth.

#### SIGHTS OF CALISTO.

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