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Through Thorny Paths.

BY MARY ROWENA COTTER.

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(Continued from last week.)
PART FIRST.

CHAPTER VI.

Mrs. Daton listened with a happy smile to the fairy tread of the little feet, then, as if impelled by some strange impulse she could not understand, she silently followed and hid herself just outside the door. The pet of the household had sprung into the ever wide open arms of the elderly lady, kissed her lovingly and then stood back from her, asking her how she liked her new dress.

"Very pretty, pet, very pretty," was the reply. "I never saw my little girl look so well. Strange mamma never thought of putting red on her before, when it is so becoming to that lovely brunette complexion!"

"It was because I was consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, grandma, and had to wear blue and white. They are her colors, you know."

"What?" exclaimed the lady, in mingled disgust and dismay. "I do not understand what you mean. Please explain, child."

"I cannot explain, grandma; that was all mamma told me, but I thought you ought to understand. You are older than mamma."

"Yes, darling, true I am older than your mother, but she does many strange things which grandma cannot understand."

"But they are right, grandma; I know they are, for mamma never does anything wrong."

"Not consciously, darling, not consciously, I hope, though I cannot understand all she does."

Through the crack of the door Mrs. Daton could see clearly without being seen, and the expression of the face of her mother-in-law caused her to feel like grasping her child and fleeing forever from the woman's presence.

It was only one of the sad remarks found in a divided household where there is no unity of faith. It was plainly evident that Mrs. Daton loved her little grandchild almost to idolatry, but her face revealed to the watcher that she believed the innocent child was being misled by an erring mother, who would bring her to ruin.

What was she to do, reveal her presence and take her pet away from this bad influence or wait and see if anything worse was said? She felt to do the first might cause ill feeling, which she dreaded, especially from this woman, whom she had always scrupulously endeavored to please.

"Grandma," asked Cecelia, looking straight into her face, whose expression she did not like, "don't you love the Blessed Virgin?"

"Why should I, darling, when I know nothing of her?"

"Oh, grandma, you don't mean it. Don't you know anything about God?"

"Certainly, child; I am a Christian and of course I know all about God."

"If you do, you ought to know something about His Mother."

"It is enough to know God and serve Him, without worshipping His Mother or any other woman."

"I love her just the same, grandma, and I know you will when I tell you all about her, which I intend to do sometime when I learn more."

"Poor, deluded baby," thought the grandmother; "it is to bad, but she is no child of mine and I can do nothing for her. When she gets older and can understand she will know better, and if her intellect develops as it promises to now, she will never submit to the errors of Romanism."

Little Cecelia in the meantime was buried in deep thought, but suddenly, the mist clearing away, her face brightened and she said:

"I will say a Hail Mary every day for you that the Blessed Virgin may teach you to know and love her."

"And I will say the Lord's Prayer every day for my little Cecelia that God may make her a good girl and teach her to know and love Him as she should."

The compact was sealed with a loving hug and kiss, and, contrary to the expectations of the woman listening at the door, it was kept for years. Little in reality could be expected from a child of seven, while no more might justly be looked for from the woman of the world, whose religion consisted chiefly in being a member of a fashionable church.

Warned that the danger was now

passed and not wishing to be observed Mrs. Daton stole back to her room as noiselessly as she had come. She had always known her child to be possessed of a bright intellect far beyond her years, but her words to her grandmother revealed her in a new light, which convinced the mother that the days of innocent babyhood were for Cecelia really a thing of the past. She buried her face in her jeweled hands and sat reflecting on her child. She longed for some one to talk to about her pet, and naturally her mind turned to the one who should be a married woman's truest friend and confidant, namely her husband; but here another glaring proof of the sorrows of a divided household stood out before her. She could talk with him of the physical comforts of Cecelia or of her pretty clothes, in which, proud father that he was, he was always interested, but on this subject that touched the very core of her heart she must be silent. So absorbed was she that she did not hear the light footsteps until two little hands encircled her waist.

"What is the matter mamma? You look as if you felt badly about something."

"Nothing, my precious pet, nothing; I was only thinking."

"Thinking about what, mamma?"

"Only my own dear little girl."

"Does it make you sad to think of me?"

"No, child, no indeed; why do you ask so strange a question?" and the mother's face was now all smiles.

"Nothing makes me happier than to think of you, my own little darling."

"Mamma dear, you did look sad, but maybe it was your other little girls in heaven you were thinking about and I thought it was me."

"How well you guessed it," said the mother, glad of an excuse.

"I wish," said Cecelia, sorrowfully, "that God had left me just one, so I could have somebody to play with. I get so lonesome sometimes."

"I wish so, too, pet, but God knows best, and they are safe from harm."

"Mamma, I wish you would take this dress off. I must not wear it to day."

"Don't you want to keep it on until papa comes, it is so pretty?"

"No, mamma; to-morrow will be time enough for him to see it. If he saw it he might ask me questions like grandma did, then if I told him that I had been consecrated to the Blessed Virgin and he said he did not believe in her, it would make me feel, oh, so badly."

"Poor grandma does not understand, pet; but if she did she would love the Blessed Virgin as well as we do; but come, take off the dress if you wish."

"Yes, mamma, for if this is the last day I am to wear the Blessed Virgin's colors, I want to keep them on as long as I can."

A little blue chambray dress which had been discarded was quickly donned again, and like a singing bird Cecelia flew away. Down stairs she went singing a few words of a hymn to the Blessed Mother of God and out to the little grotto of Lourdes, which had been a sacred spot to her from the dawn of her reason. She went from one flower bed to another, picking choice buds, but instead of taking the gay red and yellow blossoms she had always admired, she selected only blue and white, for now that she had been told that these were Mary's colors, she would offer her nothing else. The flowers of brighter hue which she herself had placed on the shrine the day before were carefully picked out and thrown away now, not even a green leaf being permitted to remain. When all was done Cecelia looked over her work with an air of satisfaction, then knelt down to pray.

In the prayers said in whispered accents she first recommended herself to the heavenly Queen, telling her how she was to take off her colors to-morrow and begging her always to watch over her and keep her for her own little girl; then she prayed for her grandma, saying the Hail Mary she had promised, and lastly, as if suddenly struck by a brilliant thought she asked for a little sister to play with.

The mother in the meantime sat in reflection deeper than that in which her child had found her. Cecelia had told her what she needed and in her heart she was strongly tempted to

rebel against God for having robbed her child before her birth of the companions she should now have had. Once her mind turned to her only sister, from whom, through her own carelessness she had not heard in four years, Nellie at that time being the happy mother of two boys, and she thought as she had once before in an hour of envy.

"God has given children to her who scarcely has the means to provide properly for one, but I, who have abundance, am doomed to bring up my own child without companionship. It is unjust." And she bowed her head in despair instead of thanking God that her darlings were safe in heaven, where no harm or suffering could ever reach them.

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dolls and other nice things to play with."

The mother did not reply, but gazed sadly at her, thinking of how unequal were the positions of the two children. She was sitting in the same room where years before little Cecelia O' Kane had awaited the coming of the grand Mrs. Daton, and she could almost hear the beating of her own heart when the sound of a light footstep and the rustle of silk fell upon her ear. The anxious moment of which she had dreamed for many days had come, and she knew well that it was to be moment of supreme happiness or supreme sorrow. All depended upon the reception her sister was to give her.

But all doubt was soon dispelled. God in His infinite goodness had for the time being fired the heart of the heart of the haughty woman with true sisterly love, and the little Cecelia of other years held her own dear sister in one long loving embrace while she showered tears of true affection upon her face. For once the critical eye of the proud creature had penetrated the loving heart beneath a poor garment.

"You are welcome, Nellie. It has been so long, so very long, since I heard from you." And then relaxing her hold, she turned to the little golden-haired girl, who reminded her of one of her own dead children.

"And this is your little Agnes?"

"Yes, Cecelia. She is all I have in the world now."

"And where are your boys? Your widow's garments tell me that you have lost your good husband, for which I am truly sorry, but the boys?"

"The boys Cecelia, they, too, like your own three darlings, are gone."

"And you never wrote to tell me about it. Why did you keep silent?"

"Because I knew that my dear little sister had suffered enough herself without being burdened with a knowledge of my troubles until it was necessary."

"Still the same loving, unselfish Nellie you were years ago, when we were two poor little lone orphans together!"

Cecelia had never before spoken of her own early life or family in the presence of her child, but she was too happy in the company of her only sister to care even when she discovered that her little one had followed her into the room and stood gazing wonderingly at the strangers. In reality she was possessed of a most tender nature, but her natural pride had been nursed by a contact with her husband's mother and a desire to please his friends until her better nature had been almost crushed.

She turned now and tenderly embraced the child of her sister, then presented her own, who received them as kindly as her mother had done. Soon Cecelia was seated on a low divan with her arm thrown lovingly around her cousin, as if she had always known her, and a pretty picture they made, though the contrast in the part smote Nellie sadly. The dark eyes and raven tresses contracted strongly with the blue ones and golden locks, and both mothers saw it; but what claimed their attention most was the costly gown on one and the neat but cheap muslin dress on the other.

"See, Nellie, how kindly our little girls take to each other," Mrs. Daton said, penetrating her sister's sad thought. "You would almost think they had known and loved each other always. Each being the only one left, it almost seems as if the proper thing would be to keep them together."

Mrs. Daton scarcely knew why she had made the last remark, but it brought a joyful expression to her sister's face. The light faded almost as quickly as it had come, however, for Nellie dared not entertain the faint hope the words had created. But Mrs. Daton had noted the effect of her words and did not forget.

"What a pretty dress you have," Agnes was saying, and she laid her little hand reverently on the gaudy folds. "I wish I had one just like it, only blue. Mamma says I always look best in blue."

(To be continued.)

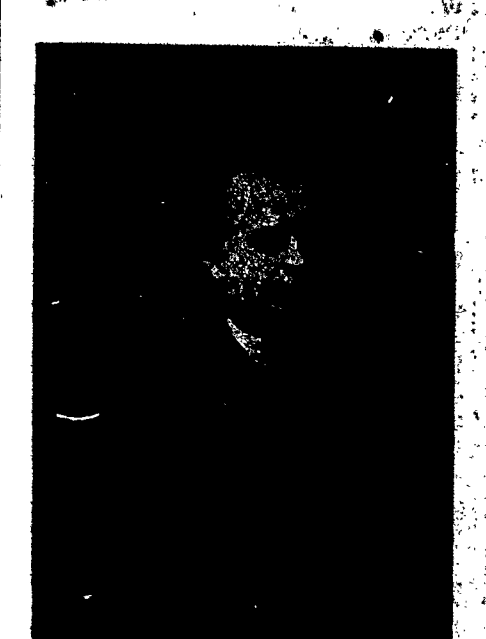
The Best Route to Pittsburg.

The Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburg Railway is the only line operating through sleepers between Rochester & Pittsburg. Night Express leaves West Avenue station Rochester 9:00 P. M. daily, arriving in Pittsburg 7:30 A. M. Day Express leaves Rochester daily except Sunday at 7:45 A. M. arriving in Pittsburg 6:45 P. M.

ARCHBISHOP RYAN.

Philadelphia Prelate Celebrates His Seventy-First Birthday.

Archbishop Ryan was 71 years old on February 20th. In accordance with his wish, there was no other observance of the event than a low mass of thanksgiving, which he celebrated in the Cathedral at Philadelphia.



ARCHBISHOP RYAN.

Few persons outside of clerical circles are aware that he has passed the allotted span of three score years and ten, for he stands as erect now as when he mounted the seat of the late Archbishop Wood of Philadelphia, eighteen years ago. There is not a gray hair in his head, a fact to which Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore playfully alluded at the recent banquet of the Philadelphia Catholic club.

Archbishop Ryan was born near Thurles, Tipperary county, Ireland. When 18 years old he entered Carlow college, where he received his ecclesiastical training. In 1852 he left Ireland for this country and became connected with the archdiocese of St. Louis. He was consecrated coadjutor-bishop of St. Louis in 1872, and while visiting Rome in 1884 was given the honorary title of archbishop of Salamina by Pope Leo XIII. On June 8, 1884, he was transferred from St. Louis to Philadelphia to succeed the late Archbishop Wood.

CHAPEL AT CRAIG COLONY.

Bishop McQuaid Submits a Statement of What Has Been Accomplished.

In the spring of 1900 the bishop of Rochester having obtained permission by a resolution of the board of managers of Craig Colony, to build on the grounds of the colony a chapel and a resident chaplain's cottage, sent to the bishops and pastors of the state of New York the following circular, together with contribution cards:

"The state of New York owns nearly 2,000 acres of land at Sonoma, where it is founding a home for the indigent and scientific treatment of the indigent epileptics of the state."

"They are from the poorhouses of all the counties of the state."

"There is no condition of suffering humanity more deplorable than that of the epileptic."

"There are in the state of New York over eighteen hundred victims of epilepsy or falling sickness."

"In April, 1900, there were 560 hundred patients in the colony; they are being admitted at the rate of 40 per month. Between thirty and forty per cent. are Catholics."

"Provision has been made for two resident chaplains; one Catholic, one non Catholic. The hall in which religious worship is held on Sunday is used for other purposes during the week."

"A resident Catholic chaplain and his flock needs a chapel for daily mass, devotions and instructions; a house of prayer always open and ready for use."

"The bishop of Rochester has offered to build and equip a Catholic chapel and a residence for the chaplain, without cost to the state. His offer has been kindly accepted."

"The work of the chapel and priest will inspire these afflicted children of the church with the hope of a happier life hereafter through the compassionate love of their Divine Savior, who loves most those whom He tries most."

"This appeal is addressed to the tender hearts of all who, grateful to God for mercies to them and theirs, are not unkind of those upon whom the hand of God has weighed heavily."

"The bishop of Rochester has no means wherewith to make good his offer save in the generosity of his own diocese and of others throughout the state."

"The appeal is but for a small sum from each one and for the willing work of willing helpers."

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