

The Catholic Journal.

Twentieth Year, No. 27.

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A Shrine Laid Waste

A motor car had just turned into the courtyard of the big house that belonged to the famous deputy for the Department of Haut Tarn, and as it drew up at the steps, the deputy himself got out of it and passed quickly up to the glass entrance door. A footman, warned by the bell that the porter had rung to announce the arrival of the motor at the outer gate, stood ready to receive his master in the hall, where the thickness of the Turkey carpets, the richness of the Eastern hangings, and the pictures on the walls, told alike of culture, taste, and lavish expenditure.

The deputy's study opened from this hall, and, crossing it, he entered the smaller room where a bright wood fire burned upon the hearth. After laying the roll of papers that he carried on his writing table, he threw himself into a big armchair and stretched himself at ease, sighing, as he did so, or rather drawing me a deep breath of satisfaction.

He was tired, it is true; but judging from his expression, his day had been passed in work that was worth the doing. It had indeed been a memorable day—a day of triumph unusual even in his successful career. He had made a speech in the Chamber of Deputies that would long be remembered. For nearly three hours he had held the attention of his audience, his flow of language had never failed; his well-chosen sentences had lashed his opponents unmercifully, the sound of the applause with which his own side had greeted his speaking cutting words still echoed in his brain, and the faces of ministers rose before him startled by his darting, triumphant in the work his oratory had done, yet so far and so spoil all. But this he had not done, he had not allowed himself to be carried away, and when at length he resumed his seat, he and his party felt that their work of dechristianizing France had made material progress.

"When first we started this campaign," he murmured to himself, "it seemed as though the very earth would rise against us, so deeply the faith of twenty centuries appear to be imprinted on men's minds. But that was twenty-five years ago, after that speech of mine, we Rationalists have a different tale to tell. In spite of opposition, we have persevered and gradually but surely we are destroying the religious sense of the people. The day is drawing near when the State will be the unrivalled mistress of the Nation" (he almost laughed at his own thought) "and I may be at the head of the State."

He paused for a moment to consider himself on this pinnacle of fame and success, and then continued his train of thought.

"I am afraid that the women still cling to the old ideas. I know if my poor wife had lived we should have disagreed; in fact, I never could have succeeded in bringing Germaine up in the way I have done. She at least is above all foolish sentiment and superstition. I took care to see to that. If all our girls could only be brought up as she has been, France would soon be freed from all religious trammels. No religious books or emblems, no church-going; no intercourse with those who hold old-fashioned ideas, not even if they are relations, unless the government chosen to carry out the scheme of education is present. I was certainly fortunate in finding one so up-to-date, so anti-clerical, I may say so anti-religious, as Mademoiselle to superintend Germaine's upbringing. Fancy nuns thinking that they could ever produce such a model as my Germaine! She is living proof of the superiority of an independent, Rationalistic education."

His reflections were interrupted by a gentle tap at the door, and, in answer to his permission to come in, the heavy curtain was raised, showing a girlish figure standing on the threshold. It was Germaine. Certainly any father would have reason to be proud of such a daughter. Tall and fair, slender and very grace-

ful, her simple tailor-made gown fitted her to perfection, and its severity was softened by the ruffles of real lace upon her bosom. Her small head and delicately formed hands and feet were an inheritance from her dead mother; and, though outwardly there was no likeness to her father, those who knew her were not long in realizing that she possessed no mean share of his talents.

When entering the room, she had turned on the electric light, and drawing forward a low footstool, she seated herself beside the armchair.

"How late you are father!" she said. "You must be tired after such a long day's work. Don't say that I am selfish, but I hope you are tired because I want you to say 'Not at home to visitors, and let me have you all to myself just for one night.'"

"What is this sudden fancy for solitude?" said her father smiling. "Or are you trying to flatter me by pretending that you don't know which of us more than half our visitors come to see? Seriously, dear, I should often ask nothing better than to have a quiet evening; but now that you are twenty-one, I feel it is my duty to give you every opportunity of finding out which of your admirers you intend to make happy."

"When I have found out, father," she said, "are you going to let me please myself, or do you want me to decide for me, even against my own wishes, like a cruel Spartan parent?" She spoke unmercifully, the light, but there was a serious undertone to her words.

"Even if I wished to act the Spartan parent, you know I could not do so now," he replied. "You are of age, and therefore free to do as you please, I suppose," he hesitated for a moment and the half afraid that he suddenly began to feel betrayed itself in an unwelcome tenderness of tone.

"You have already made your choice? I might have guessed as much, considering the number of refusals I have had to give for you."

"Yes, father," said the girl gently but firmly. "I have made my choice."

Ever since Germaine had grown up, her father had often thought of this interview, which, sooner or later, he knew would come; but now that it was taking place, there was something in it that he had not expected, that he could not understand.

"And am I to be allowed to know the name of the favored man? I own I am curious to hear whose shrine it is that so many hopes are to be immolated upon."

The girl's hand was resting on the arm of the chair, and he laid his own upon it. Her fingers closed on his; and, pushing aside her low seat, she slipped onto her knees beside him. Her answer came in a voice that was low, but very calm:

"Father, I have chosen to be a nun."

She raised her head and looked up openly and fearlessly into her father's face. But he had turned so deadly white that she was frightened, and getting up quickly, she was about to call for help, but he signed for her to come back. He had been obliged in his public life to cultivate a habit of self-control; and even now, when he saw what for years he had built up with so much care crumble to dust before his eyes, this habit stood him in good stead.

"How long have you been thinking of this?" Despite his efforts he could not steady his voice to speak as usual.

"For three years."

"Have you talked it over with Mademoiselle?"

"No, father, I could not tell any one until I had spoken to you."

"But what can have given you such an idea? One of your associates or friends must have suggested it, or at least encouraged you to think of such a thing."

"Listen, father dear, and I will tell you everything. One day when we were in the country—it is four years ago now—Mademoiselle and I came upon one of the wayside shrines that people used

to erect long ago, and that the peasants honored so much. This shrine had been a Calvary, but the cross was broken and the figure of Christ lay in broken pieces among the grass. Mademoiselle sat down upon the stone steps of the shrine; but I was not tired, and whilst she rested I amused myself by collecting the pieces of the broken crucifix and putting them together again. I did it only as a child puts a puzzle together. But when Mademoiselle saw what I had done she got up and—she, father!—kicked the figure, that was complete now, though all broken and desecrated, and scattered the pieces farther even than they had been before. I did not dare say anything to her then, and we continued our walk; but from that day, from that moment, somehow, I began to see things—life—in a different light.

"No one ever told me all that since then I have felt to be the truth. I simply know that it was so. When you and Mademoiselle have spoken of no hereafter, when you told me that death was an endless sleep I knew that, though my body must fall asleep, there was a light in my soul that must burn forever. Mademoiselle used to give me scientific reasons as to how the world was formed, but all the time I knew that God had made it. Father, dear, when by degrees I learned more about God, it made me very, very sad to think of you. But the remembrance of that broken crucifix was already a comfort, because it reminded me how much He loves us when He was willing to suffer so much for our sake. When I thought of all that He was doing for us by suffering, I wanted to suffer, too. And I asked God to show me how best to help you to see the truth again; for I want you to love Him as much as I do, and I have offered my life to Him for that intention."

Whilst Germaine was speaking her father never moved; it almost seemed as though the shock of what he heard had turned him to stone. But when at last she bent and kissed his hand as it lay still and rigid on his knee, the soft touch of her lips brought him to himself. He could not answer her, he could not speak as yet; but with an effort he motioned to her to leave him, and unwillingly she obeyed.

He had to be alone; his self-control was deserting him, and he could not bear that any one should see the bitterness that his own work had brought upon him. The shrine laid waste—before him. Every detail was familiar to him, because it was he himself who had planned and approved that laying waste. He had gloried in his successes; he had congratulated himself on having dechristianized his country, on having banished Almighty God from France; and at the hour when his hopes seemed about to be fulfilled he found that in his own home Jesus Christ had triumphed. He had thought, by banishing God's image, by forbidding all mention of His name, to rear his daughter in ignorance of everything spiritual; and God Himself had lit the light of faith in her heart, and faith had taught her love and sacrifice.

He rose from his seat and began to pace the room. The hours passed by, till at length, chilled and exhausted, he threw himself down again, this time on his knees, and buried his face in the cushions of his chair. His brain was numbed, he could think no more, only the words of another apostate more famous far than he—words spoken centuries ago—echoed dully in his ears.

"Galilean, Thou hast conquered!"—Alice Dease in the Ave Maria.

Rt. Rev. Bishop Feehan, D. D. of Fall River Mass., has forbidden Sunday entertainments to which an admission is charged. In a circular letter to his clergy he says that he is "desirous that the Church shall present a united front against this attack upon the sanctity of the Sabbath."

Easter Photographs.

Your friends will appreciate an Easter gift of a photograph if taken at Lehnkerings, 24 State St., over White Kitchen.

News From Ireland

Most Rev. Dr. Tobin visited St. Peter's church, Belfast, on Feb. 21, and administered the Sacrament of confirmation to over 800 children.

CAVAN.

Rev. M. Rudden, of St. Patrick's College, Cullin, delivered an interesting lecture on "General Griffin" in the Total Abstinence Hall, Cavan, on Feb. 14.

To mark the occasion of his election to the chairmanship of Coleraine Urban Council, the many friends of Mr. W. T. Anderson entertained him some nights ago to a dinner at the Clothworkers' Arms Hotel.

The returns for fishing on Feb. 25 were very poor, only two boats landing fish out of the fleet. Another heavy rise in prices took place in consequence of shortage and fresh orders, and 22s were paid for the entire catch. The Holy had forty-six crabs, and the Lizzie and Annie nineteen crabs. A buyer from Moscow was on hand buying large quantities of cured herrings for the Russian market. This will shorten the supply for the American and other markets.

The "Frontier Sentinel" says: "The Banbridge Guardians have not a chance at the famous Willie Wiggins at last. On last Board day he took up a position at the front entrance and amused himself by passing sarcastic remarks about the Chairman and other members. When before the Board he declined to apologise and the master was instructed to have a summons issued."

A carter's house is about to be built at Garrison Co. Fermansagh by the Rev. Patrick McCleary, P. P. Devanish, from plans prepared by Mr. J. J. Evans, C. E. architect, Belfast.

Miss McCloskey, Shanmullagh, has been appointed assistant nurse in Monaghan Workhouse Infirmary.

A very enjoyable cellidh was brought off in the school at Corke on Feb. 21, by the Gaelic class. There was a large crowd present, who were heartily pleased by the splendid program submitted, which was admirably sustained.

Irvinstown Guardians have granted a ten pound per year increase of salary to Relieving Officer Simpson.

Most Rev. Dr. Owens, Lord Bishop of Clogher, is seriously ill at his residence, Monaghan. His Lordship has been in very poor health for a considerable time, and has been confined to bed for some time.

Michael Coughlan has resigned his position as Sanitary and Relieving Officer in Scrull Union.

Dr. J. H. O'Sullivan, of Queens-town, at present ship's surgeon aboard the Cunarder "Carpathia," has been made the recipient of a handsome silver cigarette box and a gold mounted umbrella from his many friends in his native town.

P. P. Sullivan has been elected rate collector of No. 5 District by Kerry County Council.

Mr. Robert Blyth, manager of the Bank of Ireland, Tralee, for close on a quarter century has just retired on pension.

Matt O'Connor after a lapse of eighteen years, is going to regain possession of his farm at Derry, John Sandes, B. L., son of the late popular agent of Lord Armathwaite, was the landlord.

Five Minutes Sunday

The Parish of Our Lady.

Remember that on the day on which Christ entered Jerusalem the Paschal lamb was killed with great solemnity from Bethphage to the temple. It is not surprising, then, that the divine Savior should meet on some road so many people who must learn not to trust the hope for reward from God. To-day we would Christ's flag Jerusalem that the people of the people—there are we shall see His church. Mount Calvary against Calvary. Blessedness is day the are all love for His and His home—in a few days we see those who with their standing His blood.

Weekly Church Calendar.

Sunday April 4—St. John the Baptist and St. Vincent.

Monday 5—St. Vincent.

Tuesday 6—St. John the Baptist.

Wednesday 7—St. Vincent.

Thursday 8—St. John the Baptist.

Friday 9—St. John the Baptist.

Saturday 10—St. John the Baptist.

SOLY FAMILY.

The members of the Soly family are invited to a family reunion on the 10th and 11th inst. at the Soly family home, 100 St. John's St., New York.

The funeral of Patrick O'Connell took place from his late residence, 100 St. John's St., Tuesday, at 8:30 from the house of a member of the Soly family.

The annual meeting of the Soly family was held on the 10th inst. at the Soly family home, 100 St. John's St., New York.

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