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The Story of Julie Benoit.

Concluded from last week

Two days later the forewoman, seated at her desk, was covertly watching an excited group of girls on the other side of the room who were discussing some matter of evident importance. Without doubt, something was wrong. The forewoman rather surmised what the trouble was and smiled behind the shelter of a newspaper. She knew these girls and was quite sure that the difficulty, whatever it was, would be brought to her for settlement. As she had said to Julie, she loved her girls, and they in turn loved and trusted her.

In this instance she had not long to wait. Presently the girls cast aside napkins and lunch boxes and moved toward the corner of the room where their forewoman was waiting. She watched their approach in smiling silence. Slightly in advance of the others came a small, impetuous figure, a painfully thin, crossed-eyed girl of fifteen, whose abundant crop of freckles had earned for her the sobriquet of "Speckles." She had answered to that name for so long now that she had almost forgotten she ever owned any other. She was a general favorite in spite of her rather sharp little tongue. Rushing up to the forewoman's desk, she said excitedly:

"Miss Merton, can't be true that you are going to let that horrid Julie Benoit come back again. You surely wouldn't take her back, would you, Miss Merton?"

"Yes, it is perfectly true," replied the forewoman calmly. "Julie will return to us next Monday and I hope all my girls will do everything they can to make her feel that we are glad to have her back."

"But we're not glad," cried one girl.

"Why it's impossible after what she did," added another.

During the outbreak the forewoman sat watching the indignant faces before her. Then she said very gravely: "Girls, I think we all misjudged Julie, and really almost owe her an apology. I have asked her pardon, and though I do not expect you to receive her back with kindness."

"Misjudged her! Apology!" gasped Speckles. "She took that money, didn't she?"

"Yes."

"And a person who takes money that belongs to someone else is a thief, isn't she?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Well, then, I say a thief is a thief, and I don't see where any misjudging comes in," and Speckles looked defiantly from one to another.

A tall blonde, whose thoughtful gray eyes had been studying the forewoman's face, laid her hand on the excited girl's arm, remarking gently:

"Let's not judge too hastily, Speckles dear. I think Miss Merton has something to tell us. For my part I used to pity Julie, she seemed so sickly and so terribly alone. She was with us, but she was not one of us."

"You are right, Louise. I have a little story to tell you, the story of Julie Benoit," and she told them Julie's story as she had heard it from Julie herself. In conclusion, she added: "When I left that poor child beside her dead mother, I went at once to the superintendent and told him the whole story. You girls know how kind he is; more than one of you have had personal experience of his charity. He called in his wife, and together they planned to bury Julie's mother as a Catholic because she was with us, but she was not one of us."

"I wish you could have seen her face when I went back to those two dreadful rooms in the alley where she lives and told her what the superintendent and his wife had said."

"It was a very different Julie that I left that night, oh! very different from the girl who met me with such fierceness earlier in the evening. Just as I was leaving she said to me also: 'I've run to them; I say I hate them all. You think they will forgive me!'"

"So now, my girls, your welcome to Julie on Monday morning will be the best answer to that question."

"Will we forgive her, the poor girl?" cried Speckles impulsively.

"If there's anyone here who won't be kind to that poor little Julie she'll just have to reckon with me. I think it is we who should ask her to forgive us. Oh, I say girls! I've just got an idea," she continued: "suppose each one of us chip in a few pennies, we can all spare a little, and have Miss Merton give it to her to buy shoes or something for herself. I'll start with fifty cents."

The box was passed from one to another, each contributing what she could, and each contribution meaning more or less of a sacrifice to the donor. In this way a goodly sum was collected and laid on Miss Merton's table.

As the girls scattered, laughing and chattering, each to her own machine or work-table, Miss Merton looked after them, a tear in her eye and a smile upon her lips.

"God bless my girls," she said to herself. "Their hearts are in the right place, every one of them. I need have no fear of the welcome they will give to my poor little Julie Benoit."—Isabel Cecilia Williams in the Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

God's Ways.

Night and day the racking cough that knows no cure, fell on the air! My heart ached for the two men, and I went to them on my rounds, and tried to comfort them.

They were isolated cases in a great hospital; the man doomed for the "White Plague" had marked them for its prey. One was naturally a merry light-hearted fellow, a non-Catholic; in him the progress of the disease was more rapid; the other, was born of Catholic parents, had been reared in the faith but had fallen away from his religion, and had not entered a church for fifteen years. They had met in the hospital, and because they were consumptives, had fraternized, so to say, and when they were removed from the other patients, were satisfied in each other's company. The non-Catholic man seemed interested in everything he saw in the hospital, and even accompanied the patients to the chapel for Mass, but the man who was reared a Catholic, who had made his first communion, suddenly refused every opportunity of grace. His isolation from the other patients made him irritable at first, and his fellow sufferer had a hard time to make him satisfied with the necessity. This man, Cox, forced a smile from his room-mate, many a time, and I saw a gradual softening of heart, and a lessening of the bitter rebellion which possessed him.

One day I sat down with them, and Cox and myself talked pleasantly for some time. The older man, Smith, gloomily smoked his pipe.

"Mr. Cox," I said, "were you reared in my religion?"

"No, sir," said Cox. "I don't know anything about religion, but I had a mother who never refused a hungry man a meal, nor a poor man the best she could give him. Her religion was kindness, and that has been mine, to the best of my power."

"Was your mother ever baptized in any church?" I continued.

"She used to say she thought she was christened in the old country. She was an Alsatian."

"Well," I said, "I am very sure you have Catholic blood in you, and to meet your dear mother in heaven, you must be christened too. Did she never speak of your being baptized?"

"No, she said my father told her to wait till I was of age, and then I could choose my own religion, but I never went to church then, and when she died, I was too broken up to care about it. But let me tell you, sir, there must be a lot of good in religion, that makes people as kind as these Sisters are."

"Would you like to read something about their religion?"

"Sure! What will I get?"

"Why I have a book just here, that I will give you, and it will tell you the whole story," and I drew out of my pocket a copy of "Faith of Our Fathers" by Cardinal Gibbons, which I happened to have with me that day. He was pleased with the offer and thanked me warmly. Illness makes a man grateful for any kindness shown him by his fellow-man.

"That book is yours, Mr. Cox," said, "it will be a remembrance of the Mercy Hospital and myself."

"Thank you, sir," he said again, "I will read it with pleasure."

I was content with the favorable impression made, and rose to go, not without inquiring how Smith felt. He answered in rather a surly voice, "he was all right."

I did not return for a few days but I was told that Cox began at once to read the book, and now and then referred to Smith for explanations, Smith seemed embarrassed, but gave some answers from time to time which caused Cox to say to him one day:

"Why, Smith I believe you are a Catholic yourself?"

"I was once," said Smith, "but I have forgotten all about it."

"What is the right thing?"

"Well, Cox, I won't interfere; you read the priest's book, and judge for yourself; I can't deny, it seemed the right thing but that was fifteen years ago."

"And what have you been since?"

"Nothing," said Smith. "It's the Catholic Church or nothing."

Cox did not reply. The next time I went, this conversation was reported to me before I entered the room, but I did not intend to show I had heard it.

"How are you getting on with the book?" I said pleasantly, after I had shaken hands with the two men and lighted a cigar, as I was advised by the doctors to do when I was in the room. Both the men were smoking.

"Why, I like it first-rate, and I am beginning to think it's the only religion. Smith here helps me out—and—"

"Cut me out," interrupted Smith.

"Anyhow," continued Cox, "I am satisfied that it is true and reasonable, and something in my heart turns to it."

"It is the grace of God, Cox," said, solemnly, "you are not long for this world, and if the Catholic religion shows you the best way out of it, and beyond it, are you not unreasonable not to heed the beckonings of faith and the voice of your heart?"

"I have been thinking that too."

"Well, here is a little catechism, and not a question that is necessary in the whole matter, is omitted in this small book. Read it, question and answer, and tell me what you think next week."

He promised, and I placed him in my most fervent prayers and asked others to join me, nor did I forget poor Smith, who still hardened his heart to the idea of repentance and barely saluted me though I fancied at times I saw grace working in him too.

The end of it all came abruptly. Cox was seized with a violent hemorrhage, which left him weak and failing. He sent for me and I saw his days were numbered. Smith was at his bedside as tender as a mother.

"Father," said Cox, "I had made up my mind, before this took me, I believe in the Catholic religion, and I want to be baptized; I have never been baptized you know."

How I rejoiced, but I thought would test him; "but suppose you would get well, Cox, would you be of the same mind?"

"Of course, I would," he said reproachfully, "do you think I would go back on what I believe to be right?" Inwardly I thanked God, then, I asked him the necessary questions, and was astonished at the quickness with which he had grasped the truths of faith; in so short a time he had understood the value of the Sacraments, and the greatness and beauty of redemption. I baptized him and as he seemed to be growing still weaker, I anointed him, promising him I would give him,

his First Holy Communion the next day.

When the next day came, I found him almost transfigured with the blessed fruits of the Sacraments he had received, and full of faith and longing for the Holy Communion. He received most fervently, and Smith sat at the foot of the bed with his face buried in his hands. He had got to love the light-hearted, earnest companion of his sickness, his fellow-sufferer. Cox never spoke to him of his own backsliding; it was tacitly avoided after the first day.

He fell into a long, hard, agony and died that night. Smith never left him, smothering his own terrible cough, and going to the window frequently to breathe, for he suffered in body and soul.

The end was holy and peaceful and deeply impressed poor Smith. When the remains were removed from the room, the empty corner was a strikingly sad reminder of his loss, and returning next day and looking towards it, Smith broke down like a child and sobbed out loud, as only a man can sob when the roots of his heart are torn up.

"I can't stand it," he moaned again and again. My heart ached for the poor, sick fellow, and I could only press his hand. Going out, I met one of the Sisters who was sacristan in the hospital and whose duties were not among the patients but her presence I grasped, as a man does at a last hope.

"Sister, if you ever wanted to do an act of mercy, you can do it now. Go to number 82—the isolated—and console the poor man who is left alone; his room-mate died last night. His days are numbered, too, and he is all broken up; I know you are out on this duty, but go!"

"Indeed I will, gladly, Father!" she went. What followed I heard the next day.

When she entered the room, Smith with his arms on the table and his face buried in them, was shaking with sobs.

"My poor, poor, fellow," she said, in a low, tender voice, "how my heart aches for you!"

He lifted his head quickly and dashed away the tears he looked earnestly at the Sister. The voice seemed to awaken echoes of long ago. He said; "I haven't heard a voice like that, since I was a boy. Aren't you Sister Ruth?"

Now Sister Ruth had a deep, rich, contralto voice, which was noticeable even in conversation.

"Why, yes I am," was the nun's surprised reply, "but you are a stranger to me."

"Maybe I am, but all the same you prepared me for my first communion, years and years ago; you have taught so many Smiths, you never could remember me."

"Is it possible?" said the nun. "Did I prepare you for your first communion? Then you are one of my boys. But, how is it I hear, that you are not a Catholic?"

Smith hung his head and was silent.

"I guess I always was a Catholic in my heart," he muttered at last, "but Sister, knocking about in the world without friends, the heart and soul is out of you. I haven't been to church for fifteen years, and got so hard-hearted on religion that I hated the name. But poor Cox here, has dug it all up!"—he choked and had a terrible coughing spell—"yes, he dug it all up, and the sight of you, Sister, makes me want to fix it all with the merciful Lord, that is, if He remembers a poor, dying wretch like me!"

"Ah!" said the nun in a low, impressive voice, "don't you see how good He is? He not only remembers you, but He will not allow another day to pass without bringing back to Him your poor soul. That is the reason why Cox is taken and you are left! God wants to give you a chance—and, my poor boy, you are going to make use of it. I am going to give you a prayer-book, and you will prepare for confession and receive holy communion, like you did when you were my class, long ago. Come, you will—say him and as he seemed to be growing still weaker, I anointed him, promising him I would give him,

The poor man's face quivered at the mention of his friends' name; at last he said:

"I will, so help me God!"

"That's right," said the Sister, "wait a minute," and quickly she went and got a prayer-book and some works of instruction, then she marked the place and, with some encouraging and consoling words, left him to his own thoughts.

And joyously she came to me, telling the whole story. Oh! the strength, the depth, the breadth of early impressions! Oh! the ways of God in ordaining, that I should meet that Sister, and send her to the lonely marra! just the right moment!

My story is told. Smith was instructed again—made his confession and received holy communion. It took days for him to get ready—but he was a changed man. He seemed brighter, happier and even so much improved in health that he was advised to go West, that at least a few more years of life might be added to him.

He is now in New Mexico, Colorado; he often writes to me and is; thank God, a fervent Catholic.

Oh! how wonderful and inscrutable are the ways of God!—Rev. Richard Alexander in Missionary.

News From Ireland

A recent issue of the "Impartial Reporter" of Enniskillen, contains a report of an exciting scene that occurred at a meeting of the Royal Liver Friendly Society of Belfast. The report does not say if it was the lives of the members of the society that caused the rumpus.

Arraigh.

His Eminence Cardinal Logue has been pleased to raise to the dignity of Canon in the Cathedral Chapter Rev. Felix McNally, P.P., Upper Killevee, and Rev. Bernard Donnellan, P.P., Ravensdale.

Cavan.

Mrs. Anne Nicholson, Riverstown, Co. Leath, was awarded a decree for £30 against Robert Smith of Coothill for the accidental death of her son while in the employment of respondent.

Derry.

His Lordship Most Rev. Dr. McHugh, Lord bishop of Derry, has recently appointed the Rev. Father O'Doherty, O.C., of Drapers-town, to be C.C. of Urney, and has appointed Father Moonan, just returned from abroad, to be C.C. of Drapstown.

Dowry.

A horse attached to a cart belonging to James Sheridan, Tully Millford, took fright and bolted off at a furious rate down the street, tumbling the owner out of the cart. One of the wheels passed over his leg. Fortunately nothing serious happened, as Mr. E. Toye, at great risk, captured the horse before it did any damage.

Droghda.

The Rev. M. A. Dempsey, Superior of the Christian Schools, Newry, has found it necessary in face of the heavy debt that hangs over the local community of the Order, to issue an urgent appeal for funds.

Monaghan.

Rev. Hugh O'Neill, Adm., Monaghan, has been re-elected president, Thomas Toal, J.P., vice-president, and Rev. Father McDonnell, P.P., Newbliss, treasurer of the North Monaghan Executive of the U. I. L.

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Around the Globe

Catholic News From Many Places

An interesting process of beautification has just been inaugurated at Navara, France, where the Bishop has begun the judicial diocesan inquiry into the sanctity of Bernadette Soubirou. Last year it was just half a century since she had those visions of Our Lady at Lourdes which have been followed ever since by such an extraordinary and unbroken series of graces and prodigies. Bernadette became a nun and died in a convent at Navara.

By the end of 1919 every employe of the Wicklow Steam Tramway Company, whether his name is Smith, McPherson, or O'Flaherty, will have to start himself thoroughly acquainted with the Irish language, for within ten years all printing and other transactions on this line will be conducted in Irish, to the exclusion of the language of the Nation.

Bishop Feenan 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 should present a united front against this attack upon the sanctity of the Sabbath."

A remarkable old man named Thomas Fitzgerald died at Benvenant Aylm, Warwickshire, recently, at the age of 111 years. He was born in County Kerry, Ireland, and arrived in Victoria in 1837 by sailing vessel Margaret Chalmers. The Benvenant Aylm newspaper wrote to Ireland for confirmation of the old man's statements regarding the date of his birth, and were informed that official records showed that he had been no exaggeration.

The golden jubilee of St. Patrick's parish, Grass Valley, celebrated recently in a most prosperous manner. All the time and country about the celebration for St. Patrick is an institution in which our citizens take pride. It is one of the landmarks of Northern California.

Many of the old folks speak of the Big Wind of a terrible visitation upon people of Ireland of that date. He planned to learn that nothing so evil had ever come from it. We learn that Kerry Sentinel that in the presence of parish registers and other statistical authority, some of the beneficiaries of the pension law have claimed their claim to have passed their seventieth year by giving a personal experience of the "Big Wind." It is said that wind that does not blow any more.

Father Power, pastor of Saints' Church, New York City, has a congregation, the Irish, regarding education, customs of any in the United States. A few years ago starting on Erin, invited Irish Christian Brothers from "Old Sod" to take charge of school. All Saints' School is the first foundation of Irish education in America. Irish language, Irish music, and Irish customs are the proper features of St. Patrick's celebration. The presence of a drama in Celtic by the people of the parish under the auspices of their able and energetic officers, the Irish Christian Brothers.

Newfoundland has a new Catholic premier in the person of Sir Edward Patrick Morris. He is a native of the island and has been a member of the Newfoundland Parliament for almost twenty-five years.

The centenary of St. Ignace and Academy, Baltimore, Md., founded by Father Ignace, will be celebrated June 14, 15, 16 and 17.