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Kathleen

Continued From last week.

"Please God, Father! It won't be long. But" (and she lowered her eyes and spoke almost in a whisper) "I wonder if anybody knows how hard it is?"

I murmured an ejaculation. "I'm not complaining of the work," she went on quietly. "I'm used to that now. But—there are other things."

I waited and she added, her cheeks kindling now and her eyes beginning to glow:

"It doesn't matter so much about me for it seems I have to leave it all soon anyhow" (her voice shook a little); "but for the other girls, hundreds and hundreds of them, it does matter. Think what it is, Father, to be a young girl, to work steadily all day from seven in the morning till six at night, and then to come home to dirt and drunkenness and quarreling and misery! They say we mustn't walk the streets at night. Why, where can we go to get a little peace, not to talk of a mouthful of fresh air and the bit of a good time every girl needs?"

She paused, and I—well, I must confess, I had not words at that instant.

"My home is like that, Father," continued Kathleen. "If my father comes home—sober three nights out of the seven, it's a wonder. I've about supported the family—there are six younger than myself—since I was twelve; and it's getting harder and harder as the years go on. They need so many more things than they used to. But" (and she pulled herself together) "I didn't mean to complain about this; I love the children, poor things. What's mine is theirs."

I waited a moment, my heart wrung by the picture her few words had placed before me. A quick spasm of pain crossed her mobile features, and then she looked me almost challengingly straight in the eyes.

"I'm not making the mission, Father. I suppose that's what you've heard about me—that and other things." Over the concluding words she flushed a little. I bowed my head mutely; it seemed best to let her go on.

"And suppose the other things were true, Father, what would you say?"

"That depends upon the nature of other things," Kathleen.

The girl rose and walked away from me quite to the other end of the room. When she turned again, there were tears in her eyes.

"I think I'd better go, Father. I don't believe I ever can explain things. And you've been so kind to me!" She put out her hand timidly to say good bye.

"Don't, Kathleen," I answered. "I can understand perhaps far more than you suppose."

She looked at me steadily for a moment; then she said almost in a whisper, and her face paled instead of flushed this time:

"We're so fond of each other, Father—Brian and I; and now I—now I have to die!" her lips trembled, her transparent fingers interlaced.

"Who and what is he, Kathleen?" I said, trying to keep my voice steady.

"Nothing but a poor boy—poor as myself, Father," she replied with simple pathos. "But we might have had a little home some day. He doesn't drink and he's good and kind."

"And so you have spent these evenings with him?" I said quietly.

"Yes, Father," she answered. "There are so few left to us, Father. He knows I can never marry him now. The years in the shop have done their work—killed our hopes."

The bold simplicity of her statement was almost appalling. I looked at her—the frail, delicate girl—woman, for she was little more—and saw that the years in the vitiated atmosphere of the great factory, combined perhaps with insufficient food, not to mention the home atmosphere of

dirt and squalor and drunkenness had indeed done their deadly work.

"Never mind, Kathleen," I said as gently as I could. "If Brian is a good boy, and you're both keeping out of mischief, no harm has been done. Try to prevail upon him for God's sake and your sake to make the men's mission next week."

She gave me one grateful look from her eyes of Irish blue.

"Ah, Father," she replied, and her lips dimpled into smiles, "but you're the coxer!"

"Will you promise me this, Kathleen?" said I, also smiling. "And will you go to confession tonight and finish up the mission like a good girl?"

"I will—for your sake, Father. But I can't go to confession till Saturday night."

"Well, as you wish. But, somehow, I should prefer you to go tonight. Father Maurice is hearing out in the church now. He is patient and kind and would understand—everything."

For a moment the girl looked troubled, undecided.

"Ah, leave it till Saturday night, Father she said pleadingly. "And then 'tis to yourself and no one else I will go."

And now something impelled me to speak with the utmost seriousness.

"I hope you won't regret this delay, Kathleen. I said as gently as possible. "But sometimes God sends us a grace on a Thursday night which He withholds from us on a Saturday."

She seemed startled for a moment, and then she recovered herself. Taking a little ribbon from under her cloak, she showed me her Child of Mary medal, tarnished a trifle from constant wear.

"She's been looking out for me all these years," said the girl, simply; "and I think she will take care of me till Saturday, Father."

The next moment she had slipped through the door and was gone.

My thoughts that evening I can hardly put into words. They were a gamut of emotions. And my sermon—I happened to be the preacher that night—well, they tell me I thundered! A line at least three yards in length bombarded the sacristy door at the conclusion.

"O Father, what can we do?" was the universal plaint. "We didn't know the girls were having so hard a time."

"What can you do?" I said. "Go home and build them a dance hall."

The majority of my auditors gasped.

"Yes," I repeated, "a dance hall a good, decent, respectable place, as close to the church as you like—the closer the better, but with plenty of reasonable freedom. Then they won't be going to ruin on the streets. And clean your dirty homes and make them bright and comfortable."

I had caught a glimpse of my friend Mrs. Mulcahey on the throng.

"That night I fell into a heavy slumber almost as soon as my head touched the pillow. And so when my night bell rang it was an instant or two before I realized what the hollow clamor meant. But I was fully awake in another moment as a voice came agonizingly up the tube:

"Quick! Lurry, Father! Come to Mike Mulcahey's, Kathleen is dying and asking for ye."

You may be sure it did not take me long to respond to the summons.

My messenger had gone on ahead; but it was a beautiful moonlight night, and I knew my way perfectly. I had to go out into a rather unsettled part of the town, but I calculated that I could reach the house inside of fifteen minutes at the most—long enough, though for a soul to have many times passed into eternity.

"Ah, Kathleen, Kathleen, why did you not do as I wanted you to do this evening?"

I believed I breathed the words quite audibly. At the moment I looked up, and there, distinctly before me, in the bright moonlight stood the figure of Kathleen Mul-

cahey. I was about to speak, but something sealed my lips. The girl looked at me with pleading beseeching eyes. She bent her head slowly, and then like a flash I realized what I ought to do. I raised my right hand, a trifle unsteady perhaps, but my voice uttered the solemn words: "Ego te absolvo..." As they died away on my lips I found myself alone on the quiet street. I looked at my watch; it was five minutes to twelve. I continued on my errand (it seemed as if I must do so), and, the town clocks were striking midnight as I knocked upon Mike Mulcahey's door.

"Ah, too late, Father—too late!" was the heartrending wail. "She died just five minutes ago."

I stepped to the bedside and looked down upon the dead girl. Already the peace which seems to be death's own secret was settling upon her tawny young features, and I caught a glimpse of the little silver medal upon her breast. I remembered it, and her joyous trust in its efficacy.

I dropped upon my knees a moment and hid my face within my hands. Surely the Mother of Sorrows had not been unkindful of her sorrowing child.—Marion J. Brudowe in Ave Maria.

In a farewell audience, His Holiness, the Pope, said to Cardinal O'Connell, that "he knew the good done by the Federation of Catholic Societies, of which he heartily approved."

St. Patrick's high school, Columbus, Ohio, will hereafter be known as the Dominican Aquinas College.

Cardinal O'Connell is not expected to reach Boston until the 23rd inst. When he does arrive, the Ninth Regiment will act as an escort for him.

The next International Eucharistic Congress will be held this year in Vienna.

In Montreal the Catholic Girls' Club has purchased a \$10,000 clubhouse.

Some of the classic Latin poems of Redemptorist poet, Father Reuss, of Alsace, Germany, will be used in the new Breviary.

The Holy Father has appointed Mgr. Oreste Giorgi, secretary of the S. Congregation of the Council, and Mgr. Carlo Perosi, rector of the Sacred Penitentiary.

The Retort General. A southern woman who is now past her prime, but whose ready wit still makes her a welcome guest wherever she goes, tells the following story about an encounter with what she terms a "northern leger." She was at a musical entertainment at a private house in New York, and at the end of a song which had been delightfully rendered she tried with an exclamation of pleasure to a lady who sat near and whom she knew by sight, but had never met. The woman addressed looked at her in surprise for a moment and then asked cordially, "Have I the pleasure of knowing you?"

"No," was the answer, "but I felt at liberty to speak to you on account of your being under such very great obligations to me."

"Will you have the goodness to explain what you mean?" said the New York woman laughingly.

"Merely that I refused your husband twenty-five years ago," replied the little southerner as she moved away to seek a more congenial atmosphere.

The Vegetarian Oyster. Oysters are most exemplary in the matter of diet. The oyster is well enough a vegetarian, living almost exclusively on seaweed, including the minute pine pollen of the water. Smaller animals form only 5 per cent of his food. He is a methodical feeder, always dining between the hours of 12 and 2 in the afternoon. When he wants his meals he simply opens his shell and lets the water flow in through a sort of gill, which retains the food, allowing the water to run out again. It is only in frosty weather that the oyster goes off his feed. In order to protect himself as much as possible from the cold he lies with the bulging shell uppermost. In this position he cannot open his shell and must perform go short of food. But he would sooner starve than let the cold water in to chill his delicate flesh. Miss Kim—London Chronicle.

News From Ireland Saying Mass Under Difficulties.

The death of Sister Mary Augustine Sherman took place in the Convent of Mercy, Crumlin road, Belfast, December 7. Deceased, who was a native of Kilkenny and who was in the 54th year of her religious life, was engaged in nursing the sick poor in Mater hospital.

The death took place on December 2 of Frederick McElwee, stationmaster, Carlow.

Henry Moore, manager of the Scariff Branch, has been appointed manager of the National Bank in Longford.

The body of Mr. Dewar, of the White Star Line, who was lost in Cork Harbor a month ago, was washed ashore on December 6 in Clonakilty Bay, 35 miles away.

Rev. M. Shea has been presented with an illuminated address and a hall clock, by his late parishioners at Mountcharles, on his retirement after over 33 years' service.

Mrs. Needham, the Irish poetess and song writer, has handed over to the Bangor Library authorities the library belonging to her late father, J. W. Montgomery. The collection is one of considerable value.

In connection with the robbery of \$150 worth of jewelry from a mansion in County Fermanagh, Tedda Uglow, a German subject, was sentenced at Belfast to five years penal servitude.

Andrew Kelly has resigned his position as rate collector under the Kildare County Council.

Gerald Cloran, Borough electrical engineer of Limerick, has resigned his position.

Steps have been taken to bring about the sale of the estate of Thomas McCormack at Ardkill, Hollymount, to the Congested Districts Board. The landlord has expressed his willingness to sell the estate.

Married:—Nov. 23rd, at the Church of St. Andrew, Westland Row, by the Rev. J. Cullen, P. P. Tynryland, Kyran, third son of the late James Hossy, Bullock Park, Carlow, to Rosanna, youngest daughter of the late William Fitzgerald, Rathmoyle, Abbeylisk, Queen's county.

Dr. H. F. Gilligan, of the Cloughjordan dispensary district, was appointed assistant resident medical doctor of the South Dublin Union. Dr. Gilligan's appointment has caused a vacancy in the Cloughjordan Dispensary district.

Plans have been formulated by a number of prominent farmers and business men in Omagh and district to start a bacon-curing factory on co-operation lines. A considerable amount of the necessary capital has already been subscribed.

Stafford Gurvey has resigned as County surveyor to the Waterford County Council.

Dr. David O'Sullivan, medical officer of Kiltegan Dispensary district, has resigned his position.

Miss Katherine Gleen has been appointed nurse in the Manorhamilton Union Fever hospital in succession to the late Miss Ward who died while discharging her duties.

A movement has been started to organize a co-operative creamery company amongst the farmers and business men of Thomastown and district.

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American Irish Historical Society

Annual Meeting At University of Notre Dame.

Arrangements have been completed for the annual meeting of the American Irish Historical Society which will be held at the University of Notre Dame, Ind., on the 22nd and 23rd inst.

The meeting will be a gathering of all branches of Americans in the United States and will last a week.

Thomas S. Lee, the President General of the Society, has his office in Providence, R. I., and is in charge of the Society's affairs in the United States.

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