

The Catholic Journal

Twenty-sixth Year, No. 15.

Rochester, N. Y., Friday, Jan. 1, 1926.

Among the Lilies

There was a low sweet chatter in the sacristy, where girlish forms moved softly to and fro arranging vases and candelabra for it was the eve of the Immaculate Conception, and the Children of Mary were busy making the high altar of St. Martin's beautiful in honor of their Mother and queen.

Ferns and palms stood in feathery rows awaiting their placing, the tall white tapers had been deftly fitted and trimmed, but the alabaster vases that were the pride of the Sanctuary Society stood empty.

Flowers were at a premium just now for it was the opening of the social season, and the white blooms at the stores were held at fancy prices that the humble votaries of Our Lady could not reach.

"Not a lily," sighed pretty Doris Leigh, the youthful assistant of the sodality who was acting in the absent prefect's place. "And Miss Millicent always has the vases full. Everybody will say it is our fault. Renshaw told me Miss Millicent engaged her flowers two weeks beforehand. But she was away at the sanatorium this year and of course we did not know."

"They brought her back yesterday," said Lena Vane, looking up from the censer she was polishing, "and not a bit better, mama says. The doctor does not think she will live the winter through."

"Oh, how dreadful—dear, dear Miss Millicent," murmured Doris sadly.

"Who is taking my name in vain?" asked a cheery voice, and a slender figure muffled in a heavy fur wrap stepped forward into the girlish group.

"Miss Millicent," went up a dismayed but loving chorus. "Out this cold winter day!"

"And why not?" asked the newcomer, smiling as she slipped off her fur cloak and sank into the bishop's chair, her silvery hair and delicate features sharply outlined against its crimson velvet. She was a woman of middle age, but the staring brightness of her eyes, the hectic flush in her cheek, perhaps something deeper and more subtle still gave her an almost girlish look of youth and bloom.

"Oh, you are too, too ill, Miss Millicent," faltered Doris, anxiously.

"Not at all," was the bright answer. "The doctor himself brought me in his car. He agreed that it would be much better than having me worry myself in a 'temperature' at home. For I felt I could not trust you children with the altar to-morrow. I really must come and see how you were getting on."

"Oh, of course it won't look like you always made it look, Miss Millicent, but we are doing our best."

"I see you are," said the lady with a practiced glance at the ferns and palms and tapers. "And doing very well. That branched candlestick needs a little more rubbing, Doris; the chasing always took extra care. But those ferns are all I could ask. You were lucky to get them so full and fresh. They make such a lovely setting for the lilies. But where are your lilies?"

There was a moment's pause, then Doris found sorrowing speech.

"Oh, I hate to tell you, Miss Millicent, but we have no lilies."

"No lilies?" The speaker caught her fluttering breath sharply as if in pain. "No lilies for Our Lady's altar on this, her sweetest feast? Oh, my dear, dear children—"

"We tried everywhere," murmured the eager, apologetic chorus. "We all put in our pocket money and sent to every florist in town. But all the lilies have been bought up. The Lorimers are to have their first reception tonight since their return from abroad and it is Lillian's name flower, you know. So she has taken them all—"

"Taken them all," repeated Miss Millicent. "Taken all the

lilies from Our Lady. Little Lillian Lorimer. Oh, she would not, I am sure."

"Oh, but she has," said Lena, with a little laugh. "Or her mother has for her, which is about the same. You haven't heard about Lillian, Miss Millicent, and how she turned all the men's heads in London last year. Some great English lord has followed her home, and they say the engagement will be announced to-night. The reception is to be something wonderful, the whole drawing room banked with lilies and Lillian's dress fit for a queen."

"Lillian!" repeated Miss Millicent as if in bewilderment. "My little child of Mary, Lillian, who helped me to dress the altar so often for this very feast. My little white souled Lillian. Oh, she would not keep all the lilies from Our Mother if she knew. I am going to tell her."

"Oh, Miss Millicent, dear Miss Millicent, no, don't go, you are too weak, too ill. And—and—"

Doris hesitated. "Lillian has been away two years, you know; everybody says she is so changed, has grown so cold, so proud. Oh, please don't go."

But Miss Millicent had risen resolutely and drawn her cloak about her.

"It is only around the corner," she said. "And I cannot be hurt very much, my dear children, as you know. I have been dressing Our Lady's altar for twenty years, before most of you were born. And this," she hesitated, "will be the last time. So Our Mother must have her lilies if I have to beg them from the little Lillian of long ago. Let her be changed as she may."

Miss Lorimer stood by the broad window of her reception room, looking out into wintry stretch of lawn and garden below. Chill and bare and serene as was the December scene, it seemed to allure her gaze, weary, perhaps of the warmth and glow and luxury within, where the long rooms were vistas of summer greenery, the fountain splashed over waxen leaved aquatic plants, the air was filled with the fragrance of the lilies that the florist was putting in place—day lilies, Annunciation lilies, tall, snowy callas, with hearts of gold, her name flowers that were to bank mantels and windows and rise spotless over all the glitter and gleam of the banquet table to-night.

Her mother, in her pride and triumph, would have it so, little guessing the memories the white flowers woke in the girl's heart, memories that made her turn to the bare garden with tightening lips and shadowed eyes. Ah, lilies had no place in scenes like this, she felt with a dull, dead pang in her chilled heart. Their pure white bloom would soon tarnish in the garish light, they brought back to her hopes, dreams, visions that had dulled and darkened even as the lilies must in the world's fierce glare. And as she stood there, held by some sweet, mute reproach in their fragrance, there came a light step on the threshold. "Lillian, dear, I have knocked three times. May I come in?"

"Miss Millicent." The startled girl turned, feeling as if the lilies had suddenly found voice and word. "Dear, dear, Miss Millicent; why, I thought—I heard—"

and then her voice broke as she read confirmation of all she had feared on the wan, wasted, yet radiant face.

"That I was dying," said the visitor brightly, as she grasped Miss Lorimer's outstretched hands. "My dear, so I am. But I am not quite a ghost yet, though I look like one, no doubt."

"Oh, no, no, no," was the eager answer, and the girl drew her visitor to a low chair and sank down on a cushion at her feet.

"You look like your own dear, sweet self, sweeter and lovelier, if possible. But I heard such sad things about you that—that—"

she broke off suddenly and questioned in lighter tone. "When were you here, how did you come here to-day?"

"The door stood open for the florist," said Miss Millicent, "and being half a ghost, I asked no questions, but flitted in. The maid told me you were here and I

found you. I want your help, Lillian dear," the visitor went on simply, as if this reigning belle of two hemispheres was still the little sodality girl that had filled vases and trimmed tapers for her three years ago. "To-morrow will be the feast of the Immaculate Conception."

"To-morrow," was the young lady's low answer. "Ah, so it will. I—I had forgotten."

"Forgotten!" echoed Miss Millicent. "My little Child of Mary? Forgotten?"

"Aye, forgotten! all, everything," was the sudden outburst and the proud golden head of the queenly beauty sank upon her visitor's knees.

"For how long, Lillian?" asked Miss Millicent softly.

"Oh, months, years," the speaker lifted her head and looked recklessly into her visitor's face. "Don't ask me to remember, dear, old friend. It is too late, too late."

"Forgotten," repeated the lady. "You do not mean your faith, your Church, your God, Lillian?"

"Yes, yes; all, all," was the quick answer. "Don't let us talk of it, it is no use. I—I have made my choice. You cannot—you would never understand, never understand!"

Ah! yes, vaguely, dimly, as the light of some pure star struggled through the mist and vapors of earth, Miss Millicent understood. She knew the call that had sounded in this young heart in the first sweetness of its spring time. She knew the upward path from which Lillian had turned to daily in the flowering ways, that for God's chosen ones lead into darkness and night. But with the clear insight of those in whom heaven's radiance is already breaking, she refrained from appeal or reproach.

"My poor, poor child," was all she whispered, and Lillian lifted the frail hand as if it were a holy thing, to her lips, and then spoke in another tone. "Now, how can I help you, dear Miss Millicent? You want something good of me, I know. For your poor—your church—your altar. What, how much? Fleeces this lost lamb of yours for all that you need."

And again the reckless tone and word pierced the hearer's gentle heart. She had thought to find vanity, forgetfulness, some blinding, dazzling glamor that would pass with the sobering years, but not darkness, abandonment like this.

"No," said Miss Millicent, putting aside the silver purse that Lillian dropped in her lap. "For once money does not count. I have come to beg some of your lilies for Our Lady's altar to-morrow. You have taken them all for your feast to-night, Lillian."

"Taken them all! all the lilies for my feast to-night," echoed the girl in a startled tone. "All the lilies." The thought seemed to stir some long slumbering depths in the speaker's heart.

"Oh, Miss Millicent, dear Miss Millicent—what a wretch I must seem. To take all the lilies for my vanity, my folly."

"You did not know dear," was the gentle answer. "I was sure you did not know. You will give some for Our Mother's altar, and it is only a sick woman's fancy, but I feel as if I would like you to bring them yourself, and fill the vases as you used to long ago. It won't keep you more than an hour, dear—and for me—it will be the last time—Lillian, the last time."

"Oh, Miss Millicent, dear Miss Millicent, no," cried the girl brokenly.

"The last time," was the sweet grave answer. "You know it, dear. I know it. If I could only leave you as I once hoped—a lily, among the lilies, dear."

"Oh, my God! if you could, if you could," was the cry that burst from Lillian's lips as she flung her arm despairingly about the frail form and hid her tears on Miss Millicent's breast. "But I have strayed too far, too long."

"It is never too far or too long," was the low breathed answer, and the heart upon which Lillian leaned, leaped with a joy divine. "Come back among the lilies and see—"

Again soft, sweet voices were murmuring in the sacristy as girlish hands busied themselves with tapers and flowers for the Easter altar.

"Dear Miss Millicent," whispered Doris sadly. "I feel as if she were watching us from heaven to-day. The altar will be beautiful enough to please her. I am sure—Lillian Lorimer will take care of that. She has just sent a wagon load of lilies."

"Her last Easter offering to St. Martin's," said Father Brady, with a smile.

"Oh, Father!" was the dismayed chorus, for Miss Lorimer had been a busy worker for the altar all winter.

"She is not— not going to marry the English lord after all—"

"No," was the cheery answer. "She is going to do something very much better. It is no longer a secret, for she entered the Convent of the Cenacle this morning—thank God!"—Mary T. Wagonman.

Knights of Columbus.
Our regular meeting this month will be held on January 24, 15th. A large class of candidates for the First Degree will be initiated. An impromptu entertainment will be provided for by the Lecturer. A buffet lunch will be served after the meeting.

The Grand Knights has appointed a committee to select the annual K. of C. play and cast. Instructions in dancing will be continued on Monday evenings during January. Brother W. Arthur Dugan will be in charge. This privilege is extended to the members and their lady friends.

There will be an adjourned meeting of the Fourth Degree Assembly held on Thursday, January 14th, at 6.30 p. m., at the Hotel Eggleston.

The annual Fourth Degree Reception will be held on January 20th at Rochester Club.

There will be an impromptu dance on Wednesday evening, January 13th at the Club. Leinard's orchestra will furnish music for a programme of eighteen dances. It is planned to hold these informal dances at least once a month.

A smoker on Saturday evening, January 23rd. Plenty of entertainment will be provided and lunch will be served.

A Minstrel Show on Friday evening, January 29th for the members and their ladies. Plenty of fun, good singing and entertainment. If you don't believe it, come and see.

Resolutions
Whereas, God in His Infinite Wisdom has been pleased to remove from our midst our beloved brother, John Riley, be it Resolved, That we, the members of Division No. 7, A. O. H., do hereby express our heart-felt sorrow and extend to the bereaved family our sincere sympathy, for while they mourn the loss of a loved one, we mourn the loss of a faithful member. Be it further Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be entered on the minutes and published in The Catholic Journal.

John Ehrig, Pres.
Wm. J. McGrath, F. S.
Thos. H. Nash, R. S.

Increased Accommodations
The influx of after-the-holidays students at the L. L. Williams Rochester Commercial School has made it necessary to install quite a number of new typewriters, which was done yesterday. Other pupils are expected in both the day and evening classes next Monday. Those interested are invited to call. Catalogue to any address.—Adv.

The Catholic Press
In urging support of the Catholic Press our Holy Father, Pope Pius X, has said: "In vain you will build churches, give missions, found schools—all your works—all your efforts, will be destroyed if you are not able to wield the defensive and offensive weapon of a loyal and sincere Catholic press."

News From Ireland

Cork.
On the motion of James Murphy, seconded by John Brady, the County Council passed a resolution of condolence on the death of James O'Leary on his 82nd birthday, occasioned by the death of James O'Leary.

Cootshill No. 1. The District Council passed a resolution of regret on the death of J. J. McKay, S. S. O., an officer of the council.

On the motion of the chair William Carmody, Esq., Chairman of the Board of Guardians, expressed his sympathy with the members of the late James O'Leary and a resolution was adopted by the Rural Council.

The late T. Goggin, who was a member of the County Council, and personal estate valued at £1,100.

Miss I. McKay, Archdeacon recently appointed, member of the County Council, has resigned owing to ill health.

Having been killed by a horse, his father's horse, Arthur Woodward, of Derry, was injured.

At St. Joseph's Catholic church, Rathmullan, James McGeoghegan, cattle dealer, Sreen, Milford, was married to Sophia Green, niece of Michael Deany, cattle dealer and farmer, Rathmullan.

Phillip N. Boyd, Arranmore has been appointed to the magisterial bench.

The late P. McCartan, Cattle dealer, left estate valued at £10,233.

Meet Rev. Dr. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin, has sent a cheque for £3,143, collected in the Dublin diocese, to the Belgian relief fund.

J. A. Grant, secretary and manager of the Galway Bay Steamboat Company, has been appointed agent in Galway for Lloyds of London.

Archdeacon O'Leary has erected a beautiful new altar at a cost of about £2,000 in the parish church of Kenmare.

The late F. McGillicuddy Denry, J. P. Tralee, left personal estate valued at £10,000.

The death is announced of the Rev. P. Garvey, P. P., Newtownsandes.

E. L. O'Brien has been co-opted a member of the County Kildare distress committee.

Mrs. Gardner, teacher of the Girls' school, Fermagh, has retired from the teaching profession after over forty year's service.

The County Leitrim committee of agriculture and technical instruction have unanimously co-opted Father McLaughlin in the room of the late Father Kelly, C. C.

Mrs. Margaret O'Rourke, aged about 60 years, who was the only occupant of the house in which she resided at Bruree, was found dead a short time ago.

The Earl of Longford has appointed W. B. Stanley, Coolamber, Manor Egdworthstown, to be a deputy lieutenant for County Longford.

Thomas Quinn, color sergeant Grenadier Guards, youngest son of Peter Quinn, Little Mills, Dundalk, aged 23, was killed in action in France.

Thomas Duffy, Fair Green, Westport, was the recipient of a presentation from his friends on the occasion of his departure for America.

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St. Stephen's school, Drogheda, has 1,000 personal school frontages and 118 teachers.

The National Order of Daughters of Immaculate at Ulic, N. Y., eleven years ago has now about 35,000 members.

The St. Vincent society is now established in the parishes of Denver, Colo.

The new Leo House in New York, for German immigrants will cost about \$150,000, of which sum \$24,000 has already been subscribed.

Bishop Duret, Vic. Apost. of Egyptian Delta, is now the Superior General of the Society for African Missions to Lyons.

The war has reduced the students at the Seminary of the Lyons African Missions to four.

The Dominican Sisters will establish a convent in Japan.

The Passionist Fathers have opened a new juniorate for postulants in Dublin.

Of all the Order of nuns in the Church, the Franciscan nuns are the most numerous in the mission of