

Josephine turned away her head, and made a great clatter with her cooking utensils.

'If he must go, he must go,' she said gruffly. 'Perhaps thou and I will not live to see him return; perhaps he will not desire to return when he has seen life. It is not likely he would come back among old people in this lonely place. We shall all be old together—thou and I, and Michel and Jacques, and even Menelik and Mimi—once the boy has gone.'

'Think how he will come back! So tall and straight, and twirling his moustaches, as they do in the army,' Jean Marie said.

'It will not be the same,' Josephine murmured. 'Things will never be the same. It has been good for us all while he has been here. But the world will swallow him as it gave him to us. Or he will come back to find us dead, and he will have no heart for the farm. Paris will call him. What is there here for the young?'

In her heart she had a thought that Jean Marie might buy off the lad if he would. If the same idea had occurred to Jean Marie, he said nothing of it. To be sure, it would be a wild thing to put down good gold to buy off a foundling, a child of the Assistance Publique, from serving with the army. Yet he had grown so dear to them, almost like a son of the house, and they were all so old; he had brought youth into their lives, and he would leave behind only the sadness and weariness of old age.

The boy indeed showed no delight in the thought of going. The other lads were often as eager to leave the farms as the swallow is to go south on the edge of winter.

'It will be fine for thee, Pierre, to wear uniform and march to the music with the others,' the Cure said one day, meeting Pierre on the level road between the salt-marshes and the sand-dunes. 'To be sure, it is fine to be young. Yet, Pierre my child, come back to us, not as I have seen others return, but with an unspotted heart. That will be my prayer for thee—that thou mayst be unspotted from the world.'

'I wish I could stay,' Pierre replied, and his lip trembled a little. 'I am not like the others, who go whistling all day because the time is near for the years of service in the army. Seest thou they are so old, Monsieur and Josephine. How do I know that I shall see them again? And I have no love for towns.'

'I have brought thee thy papers from the Assistance Publique,' said the Cure. 'It will not be so long, thy three years. They will wait for thy return. Be sure thou dost return.'

'I will surely return to you, if I live,' Pierre said seriously, taking the packet of papers the priest handed to him.

They walked across the salt-marshes to the farm together, talking as they went. It had been a wet winter, and Jean Marie's rheumatism had been worse than ever before. The green damp lay in streaks on the statue of St. Anthony. But spring was in the wind, and the Cure who had the heart of a boy, though his curls were grizzled, felt his heart lift as they stepped briskly along the road that climbed to the farm.

Jean Marie was within. Having laid down the packet of papers before him, Pierre went out, leaving the two old men together. Josephine was clattering her crockery in some back region. Stretching his hands to the warmth of the fire, the Cure looked up and was struck by the cheerful expression on Jean Marie's face.

'I had made up my mind to buy him off the service,' he said. 'It would be too great a wrong to myself and Josephine to take the chances of the years. And—and—who knows what the camp and the town might do for Pierre?'

'Who knows? He is a good lad and a brave lad. Thou rememberest the wrock last winter—how he was the first to offer to go? It is well, Jean Marie. The lad has grown very dear to thee.'

'Like my own son.'

'And it is not right the one son of the old should go. Besides, the boy's heart is with thee.'

Jean Marie was carefully taking one document after another from the packet, and smoothing it out to read it. He looked about for his spectacles.

'Permit me, Jean Marie,' said the Cure, stretching his hands for the papers. He held them near the window.

'Perhaps,' said Jean Marie, in his slow, dreamy voice—'perhaps it was so; the dear St. Anthony answered my prayers. I am resigned to think that Gabrielle is dead, that she will never return to the farm, that she is in the mercy of the good God. The great world that took her from me has given me Pierre. I shall not be without a son in my old age.'

'Jean Marie, my friend,' said the Cure suddenly, in a voice of great agitation, 'God's ways are strange, and more wonderful than we can imagine. What if Pierre were your own son? You did not know, but see here it is written down: "The son of Jean Marie Malahiende and Gabrielle,

his wife, born in the Hospital of the Holy Pity, January 25, 1886."'

Jean Marie put his hand to his head with a trembling gesture, as though he tried to understand.

'What!' he exclaimed. 'Read it again. My son and Gabrielle's! That was four months after she left us. We never knew, the mother and I, else the mother would have ceased to scold her, or I would not have permitted it. My son and Gabrielle's!'

'She died in the Hospital of the Holy Pity with the Good Nuns. She died in the arms of Mercy.'

'I want my son,' said Jean Marie, standing up and stretching his arms as though they would close upon the boy. 'My son! I have a son! My heart melted on him when I saw him first looking at me with Gabrielle's eyes.'

'He is as like thee as two peas,' said the Cure. 'Where were our eyes?'

Jean Marie took a step or two toward the door. As he looked out his eye fell on St. Anthony.

'Ah, there he is,' he said—the dear saint who finds that which is lost! He shall have a new coat. There is so much to do, now that the spring is coming. Josephine, come here and listen! I have a son. Pierre is my son. He will close my eyes and thine.'

Pierre came with a lagging step through the gateway. Jean Marie flew to him and caught him in his arms.

'Thou art my son, Pierre,' he cried; 'really my son—the son of my body as well as the son of my heart! Thou wilt stay with us; we have need of thee. Ah, Pierre, my son! And thy mother is in heaven. We shall build an altar, thou and I, to the dear St. Anthony.'—*Are Maria.*

## NEW BOOKS

With the November number of the American *Ecclesiastical Review* there began what promises to be one of the best stories of Irish clerical life yet written by Canon Sheehan, of Doneraile. It is entitled *The Blindness of the Very Rev. Dr. Gray, or The Final Law*. All the verve and charm of Canon Sheehan's style, and all the richness of his matter, is to be found in the instalments of this fine story that have appeared. The December issue is well up to the customary standard of that high-class ecclesiastical magazine. 'A Review of Modernism in the Past Year' is continued, and there is (among other things) an illuminating and practical article on the new Apostolic Constitution of the Roman Curia. (W. P. Linehan, Australasian agent, 309-11 Little Collins street, Melbourne.)

We have received from the Catholic Young Men's Society, Dungarvan (Ireland), a neat brochure containing the lecture on New Zealand delivered there during last October by the Very Rev. Father Power, of Hawera. The lecture (the leading features of which appeared some time ago in our columns) is entitled 'New Zealand: The Islands of the Blessed.' It contains a description of the scenic beauties of New Zealand, couched in language of much eloquence and poetic charm, a brief account of the native race and its ways, of our progressive legislation, and of the honorable part which Catholics and Irishmen have played in building up this Dominion. On reading through this well-printed brochure we can well appreciate the remark of the chairman (Very Rev. Canon Power, P.P., V.G.) that the eloquent descriptions of the pastor of Hawera would tend to make all the young people present emigrate to New Zealand. The second part of the brochure contains the addresses presented to Father Power by the Catholic Young Men's Society in Dungarvan.

Whitcombe and Tombs deserve well of this Dominion for the excellent series of works with which they are enriching our country's literature and illuminating its earlier and later history. The latest of their contributions to local history is a second edition of the Rev. H. T. Purchas's *Bishop Harper and the Canterbury Settlement*. This edition is revised and considerably enlarged, new chapters written and many old ones recast and enriched with new material. Our Catholic as well as our Anglican readers will be interested in this well-written record of a life that played so important a part in the history of the Canterbury Settlement, of his relations with the founders, of the difficulties of pioneer missionary travelling—of which the Catholic counterpart has of late been appearing in our pages—of the stirring times of the gold-fever in Otago, and of many other incidents by flood and field that go to form an interesting history. Bishop Harper seems to have been a man of real piety, and some of the revelations of his inner soul taken from his diary (pp. 12-13) show him to have been strongly influenced by the Tractarian Movement. 'Wednesday self-mortification' and 'Friday self-mortification' and meditation seem to have formed part of the Bishop's life. The book is ably written, and, so far as our perusal of it has gone, written in a good spirit. The book-work is excellent. (Pp. x-254.)