

up the turf and wood on the fire, and the little room was warm and cosy. Before composing myself I had glanced out into the night. It was still snowing, and the wind was blowing, but not so furiously as it had before. I greatly hoped that before the morning broke the storm would have passed.

Then I began to review the past history of old Molly Merlin and her grand-child, Kate Penton. What had happened to the girl? No longer a girl, but a fine young woman; and in the great, cruel, wicked metropolis, the huge city of evil, alone and friendless. If she were not afraid of me, why had she not sought me out? She evidently was not badly off, or she could not have forwarded the sums of money mentioned by her grandmother. But why should she not have given more information? She was, I knew, wayward and headstrong. Had she drifted into wicked ways of the sinful city? How could she be saved?

I had found on the shelf a well-worn edition of the beautiful story of *Fabiola*, and I interested myself in its contents. The time passed. At length, what with reading and musing, I began to feel sleepy; so I looked to the fire, turned down the lamp, and dozed.

How long I had been sleeping I know not. I woke with a start. The fire had burnt low, and there was a cold keen blast of air in the room. The door was open, and in the open doorway stood the figure of a woman. A shawl was thrown over her head, and her dress was hidden by her waterproof, but shawl and waterproof were covered with snow.

I speedily roused myself. Placing my finger on my lips, and pointing to the room in which the sick woman was resting, I motioned to my strange visitor to close the door and to be silent.

I then turned up the lamp.

In a whisper of suspense the stranger said: 'What, Father Cuthbert! are you here? And where and how is my granny?'

Yes, it was no other than Kate Penton herself.

'Sit down,' I said, 'and I will tell you all; but first you must let me know how you have come here on this awful night, and by means you reached the cottage. I will first see that our dear old patient is quite comfortable.'

I passed into the little bedroom, and found Molly Merlin sleeping peacefully.

'Now,' I said, 'before you begin your story, you must have some refreshment, after your buffeting with the storm.'

The kettle was handy, and it did not take long for the young woman to provide herself and me with a well made cup of tea. I had prided myself some hours previously on my operations; but the quiet, noiseless and speedy way in which Kate Penton set to work quite startled me. She had put aside her shawl, her waterproof and her goloshes, and stood attired in the travelling dress of a lady, and a fine, tall, handsome lady she was.

'Now, Father,' she said, 'I will tell you how I got here. Somehow or other I couldn't rest in London. I felt I must come back to the old cottage by the cairn, and see granny once more. So I came on to Canrith. There I got a trap and intended to drive up the valley to granny's cottage, but when I got to the last cottage, about two miles from here, the coachman refused to go a step further. The storm was then beginning to rage in all its fury. So he put up his horse and trap in an old disused cowshed and stable, and we took shelter in the cottage. The old cottager told me that the priest had gone on some time before to see Molly Merlin. That is why I wasn't surprised to see you. The old man only wondered how you could have faced so terrific a storm.'

'It was impossible to proceed at once, so I waited. I've known many a terrible snowstorm in these parts, but I think I have never witnessed anything like this present one. How you ever reached the cottage I can't imagine. And so I waited, and waited, and the hours were so long, so dreary, so terrible, the suspense so great that at last, when there came a lull, I determined to face the fury of the night and battle my way to the old cottage. What if I should not find granny living! It was only two miles and I knew every foot of the way, and so I set out. I came on, and am, thank God! here.'

'I think,' I said, 'I hear your good granny calling, so I'll just slip in and see what she wants.'

Yes the good woman was awake, and gently I broke to her the glad tidings of the wanderer's return.

'Ah,' she exclaimed. 'How can I sufficiently thank God for this great favor and blessing! Now, indeed, I shall die happy. Bring her to me, dear Father!'

She was in a very exhausted state and very weak; so I bade her be as calm as she could.

The happy meeting of the aged woman and her grandchild I shall not attempt to describe. I left them together for some time and returned to the fireside, where I sat musing over the Providence that had so wonderfully arranged all the strange incidents of that night.

At length I was roused to consciousness of my surroundings by a gentle hand placed on my shoulder. It was Kate Penton. Tears were in her eyes and on her cheek. She spoke in a broken voice. Her granny was worse: she wished to see me.

When I came to the bedside I saw that the end was not far distant. Poor old Molly Merlin had nearly finished her long life journey. Her voice was weak, and she spoke in a broken whisper. She begged me to read the prayers for the dying, and to pray for her happy death.

Full of beautiful sentiments of ardent gratitude to God for all his mercies, she commended herself and her granddaughter to the fostering care of her gentle Saviour.

'Don't fret, Katie darling,' she whispered, 'Father Cuthbert will be always a kind friend and father to you; and I know you'll keep the promises you have made to me. God ever bless you!'

We watched and prayed. As the dawn came, a faint light lit up the dying woman's face, a sweet smile flickered on her countenance, a sigh parted from her lips. All was still. The merciful angel of death had taken to her eternal home the soul

of the faithful old Catholic. The morning light broke over the old cottage by the cairn, and shone on the placid features of the dead.

In that place, made sacred by the presence of the dear departed one, Katie told me the history of her life in London.

She had a good voice and a fine figure, she was fond of singing and of dancing, and so she soon found her way to the Music Hall stage.

'Oh, Father,' she said, 'it was terrible work in the beginning, struggling for existence, but I struggled and kept myself straight; and I succeeded in the profession. But in the midst of all my temptations I thank God I never drifted into a sinful life. I never dragged my womanhood in the mire. My Mother Mary has saved me from that. You know this medal, don't you, Father Cuthbert? It is the one you gave me when you were once on a visit here. I've kept it ever since, and I hope I shall wear it all my life. You see,' she added, 'I wear it now not on a piece of ribbon, but on a golden chain. I bought that chain as soon as I could afford it. The medal deserves all the honor that I can give it. Again and again, in trial and trouble, I've looked at it, I've kissed it, I've treasured it. At times I've almost tired of life; and when I've left the music hall I've strolled down, in the silent hours, to the dark river that runs through the gay wicked city, and have thought how many sad lives its murky waters have ended. But I've clutched my medal, and it has stood between me and temptation and despair. My sweet Mother Mary, whom granny taught me as a child to love, she has saved me.'

'I've been, I know, a giddy, foolish, wayward, worldly girl. I've been spoilt and petted. My life has been full of flattery and gaiety. I remember once I accepted an invitation to supper. Somehow or other my medal was hanging exposed. The brute who was entertaining me passed a blasphemous remark. My blood was up; he had insulted one most dear to me, for whose sake I'd forfeit all. I dashed the champagne I was drinking into the wretch's face; I struck him with the glass and cut his sleek handsome coward face. They knew me then; they respected the lone girl; they knew they could not insult me with impunity.'

'See, then, Father, what I owe to my heavenly Mother. Somehow or other she has kept me straight. She—and—and—the good dear old granny who has gone to her eternal blessed reward. I know I've been wild and haven't kept to my religion, but generally I've been to Mass, and I have never forgotten a little prayer and my trust in God's holy Mother. I don't deserve all the blessings and favors I've had, but I thank God for them; I realise them all now as I never did before. I've promised the dead to lead a better life, to mend my ways. It's never too late to begin again, and so I promise God to serve Him better.'

Time went on. Kate Penton kept her word. She gave up the life which had been full of temptation and where the struggle for virtue was hard, and in time became a trained nurse in one of the great hospitals in London. She edified all by her quiet practice of her holy religion. The other day she wrote to me to ask my prayers. She was leaving England with the Army Nursing Sisters for service with the South African Field Force.—REV. LANGTON G. VERE, in the *C.T.S. Series*.

CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES IN THE FAR EAST.

A SLANDER REFUTED.

BY REV. C. COGNET, S.M.

UNDER the title 'The Catholics in Japan,' the *Budget* (weekly edition of the *Taranaki Herald*) published in a recent issue a mischievous article which roused the indignation of many Catholic subscribers. Quoting three unknown authorities (Edw. Runge, Dr. McArthur, and Dr. W. Elliott Griffiths), the prejudiced author ventured to assert that the present Chinese difficulty was mostly due to the 'aggressiveness' of the Catholic missionaries, whose 'arrogant and overbearing behaviour to the natives' called for a general uprising against European interference. As usual in such blundering attacks, the Spanish Inquisition is dragged by head or heels, and aspersions are cast on St. Francis Xavier's marvellous work in Japan.

What the *Budget's* correspondent means with these vague and uncandid accusations we can only guess: because, on some occasions, a bishop or a missionary, backed by the foreign Legations, was happy enough to rescue some unfortunate Christian individual, likely innocent, from the clutches of a bigoted mandarin bent on persecution, Edw. Runge and Dr. McArthur call this merciful and judicious action a 'meddlesome intrusion into Chinese internal affairs.' But, of course, if the same individual had been delivered by the medium of a British consul or of a Protestant divine like Dr. McArthur, then the English Press would celebrate the name of the influential benefactor of mankind who stood for justice, innocence, or mercy.

But since there is trouble in China, somebody must be to blame. Now the Catholic missionaries have dared to convert, baptise, and educate some 600,000 Chinese, with very slender resources, while their non-Catholic rivals—divided into some scores of separate and antagonistic organisations—have been spending millions of money in securing the more or less nominal adherence of some 50,000 or 60,000 natives, some of them, as Protestant natives testify, being merely of the 'rice-Christian' class. The Catholic missionaries must therefore be blamed for the crisis. They are made as the scapegoat of the Jews of old—the victim of universal propitiation. The pagan Romans of old cried out: 'Down with the Christians! The Christians to the lions!' whenever crops failed, the hail battered the vines, the thunder added the eggs, earthquakes loosened the bricks in their houses. And such in effect is the logic of the