

'Sheila won't want it,' Leonard replied. 'And I'm glad you thought of Miles. He'll marry some day and have a son, perhaps. And, as you say, the wee girls are all right.'

For several years after the old man's death things went on happily at Leamont. Then suddenly and unexpectedly there came an awful change. Misled by unwise advisers Leonard Burke invested large sums in what he considered brilliant and safe speculations. For a short time they paid well. Then came the crash, and one day to his horror he found that all his money was gone. The shock was terrible, and his losses preyed so heavily upon his mind that he fell ill. From the moment the dreadful intelligence reached him a kind of despair took possession of him, and he died before the close of the year. After his death it was found that only a few thousands remained for his wife and daughters. This sum would, they calculated, bring them in but a small income, and they were greatly perplexed as to where they should live. Then while they were debating Miles Burke wrote to them from Australia, begging them to stay where they were.

'I am accustomed to a wild life, and could never settle down now in Leamont,' he said. 'So pray continue to live on in the old home. It pleases me to think of you there. I have willed it to my adopted son, whose mother, though she preferred and married another, was my first and only love. She left him to me at her death, and he is like my own. But till I die he will not trouble or disturb you.'

This was considerably more than they had expected, and was an immense relief to Mrs. Burke. She loved the country and the people and was determined never to leave either till she died. But to be allowed to stay on at Leamont was an inexpressible joy and delight, and she accepted her brother-in-law's offer with grateful and heartfelt thanks.

To live rent free was a great boon to the impoverished lady, but notwithstanding this assistance her small means forbade her keeping the house as she had been wont to do. So shutting up the largest portion of it she and her children established themselves in one wing, with only the faithful Molly to look after and attend to them.

Mrs. Burke's sister, Mrs. Trevor, a worldly-minded though kind-hearted wealthy widow, was much distressed at the disagreeable change in their circumstances.

'The girls' prospects are ruined,' she cried. 'How are they ever to get married without fortunes and living in such a way? It is dreadful.'

'They must take their chance, dear,' Mrs. Burke said gently. 'And I am not uneasy. God will take care of them. Our lives here will be quiet and peaceful.'

'That's very well for you. But I can't let the girls waste their youth. They must come to me. I can give them opportunities—help them to marry. So come to London; you can keep your room and be as quiet as you please.'

'No, no,' Mrs. Burke flushed. 'London would kill me. I'll stay here with Molly. The girls must decide for themselves and not think of me.'

'Good! I thought you would not oppose my plans. Society will be much pleasanter for me with two fine girls to take about. Not that Annette's much to look at; still, when well dressed, she'll pass. But Sheila will make a sensation. She will not trouble me long.'

But to her astonishment and indignation Sheila refused to trouble her at all. Nothing would induce her to forsake her mother. She loved the country, her work in the schools, the poor people in their homes. She would not leave them.

Annette was fond of gaiety and town life, so she was the one to go.

Mrs. Trevor fumed and fretted. Annette was not the niece she wanted. But at last, seeing that Sheila was immovable, she bowed to the inevitable and allowed Annette to accompany her to London.

Much to her surprise, the young girl was both liked and admired, and in due time became engaged to Major Henry Becham.

Delighted, Mrs. Trevor gave Annette a handsome trousseau, and did all she could to make her wedding a brilliant one. Mrs. Burke, who had been for sometime in delicate health, was not well enough to go to London to see her daughter married. But Sheila went over for a few days, and in her pure white dress and big hat and feathers made a most charming and beautiful bridesmaid. Everyone remarked her, everyone admired her, and Mrs. Trevor was more anxious than ever to persuade the girl to live with her. But Sheila was, if possible, more determined in her refusal than before, and she insisted not only on going home, but on going the very day after the wedding.

Annoyed by the girl's obstinacy, Mrs. Trevor bade her a cold good bye, and Sheila set out on her journey feeling saddened and depressed. But as she left the railway station at Oote-hill and drove through the fresh air towards Leamont her spirits rose and she thanked God that her home lay in the beautiful country rather than in the crowded smoky town.

Then, when Molly admitted that her mother had been ill enough to require the doctor during her absence, her heart sank once more, and she ran up to her room nervous and alarmed.

'I'll never leave you again,' she cried, her arms round her neck, her cheek pressed to hers, 'for I see you cannot get on without me.'

'It's good to have you back, darling,' replied the delighted mother, 'but to keep you always would be—well, impossible.'

'Why, I'd like to know.'

'You'll one day follow Annette's example.'

'Nonsense.'

'No, pet, it is not nonsense, and I am unselfish enough to say that I hope you will.'

'Then you are a most unkind little mother, and I say that the man who marries me must marry you; we cannot be separated. So there.'

Mrs. Burke laughed and pinched the girl's soft rounded cheek. 'Only one man in a million would consent to take his mother-in-law in like that, Sheila.'

'Then till I find that one here I remain Sheila Burke, spinster. I might meet a worse fate.'

'My darling, God keep you. Your aunt Trevor thinks you waste your life here.'

'Aunt Trevor knows nothing about it. I could not live in her world, it stifles me. And I pray earnestly night and day that if I ever marry it may be someone who will let me make my home in Ireland. Is that too much to ask, mother?'

Mrs. Burke looked up into the beautiful, earnest face.

'No, darling, but we must always submit to the Divine Will.'

'Certainly, and we are in God's hands, so must not trouble about the future. And now you are longing, I know, to hear something of Annette and her brave soldier.' And seating herself at her mother's feet she gave her a full account of her sister's wedding.

Molly's assertion that Mrs. Burke was only pining for a sight of her daughter seemed a true one, for from the hour of the girl's return she improved rapidly, and was soon in her usual state of health.

March that year was wild, wet, and blustering. Fierce gales raged in every direction, and across the beautiful lake, down to which sloped the lawns and gardens of Leamont, swept continual storms of wind and rain, disturbing and agitating its usually calm waters in such a way as to render boating upon it both dangerous and unpleasant. At any other time this would have been a trouble to Sheila, who dearly loved the lake, and looked upon the quiet hours spent in her boat as the happiest of the day. But at present she had so much to do, her work having fallen sadly behind during her absence in London, that she did not much care, and scarcely regretted the unsettled weather that kept her indoors.

One day, however, when, having dismissed some three or four poor children whom, at the request of the parish priest, Father Tom Ryan, she had undertaken to prepare for their First Communion, Sheila threw a shawl over her head and stepped out of the morning-room window on to the broad terrace walk at the back of the house.

The wind, which had raged fast and furious during the night, had suddenly dropped; the waters of the lake had gone down considerably and the sun had come out bright and brilliant. The air was sweet, soft, and healing. The girl drew a long, deep breath.

'How delicious,' she cried, 'and how inviting the lake looks. I must really go for a row. It's a little rough still, but that matters little to me.'

To return to the house and put on a neat, warm jacket and close-fitting felt hat was the work of a few moments, and then the girl tripped down to the little boat-house by the water's edge, humming a gay song as she went. She untied the rope that fastened the painter, drew the skiff close, and jumping in, pushed off from the shore.

For some time all went well. Sheila managed the little craft with great adroitness, and it ran gaily along before the wind. Then all at once a black cloud appeared overhead, a sudden squall sprang up, and the girl turned the boat and rowed vigorously back towards the house.

(To be concluded in our next issue.)

The Catholic World.

AFRICA.—Death of a Dominican Nun.—The *Capetown Mercury* announces the death of Mother Mauritia, for many years Prioress of the Dominican Convent of the Sacred Heart, King Williamstown, the parent house of so many other convents of the same Order in South Africa. Bishop McSherry travelled from Port Elizabeth to visit her in her last hours. His Lordship officiated at the funeral and preached a touching panegyric.

CANADA.—Spiritual Aid for Galician Immigrants.—The Rev. Father Lacombe, who has been a missionary in the Canadian North-West for fifty years, has just returned to his post after paying a visit to Europe in the interest of the 30,000 Galician immigrants who are now settled in Manitoba and the North-West territories. Father Lacombe visited Rome, Vienna, and Galicia in the endeavor to provide priests of the Greco-Ruthenian rite for the Galicians and Poles in the Far North. It is no easy matter to secure such priests. The Holy See does not allow priests of the Latin rite to pass over to the Ruthenian, and the Superiors of the Ruthenian Religious Orders say they cannot spare any subjects; *non habemus homines* was the invariable reply. Father Lacombe, however, received much assistance, as well as encouragement and thanks, from the Emperor of Austria, his Minister, Count Goluchowski, and Mgr. Count Szeptycki, Ruthenian Bishop of Stanislan, himself a Basilian.

ENGLAND.—The Bishop of Salford on Prayers for the Dead.—The Right Rev. Dr. Bilsborrow, Bishop of Salford, consecrated a few weeks ago a cemetery, and laid the memorial stone of a mortuary chapel, which has been provided for the Catholic missions of Nelson, Burnley, Brierfield, Barrowford, and Colne. The cemetery is situated about a mile from Nelson in the Fendle Forest district. After the service the Bishop gave an address in which he defended the Catholic teaching of praying for the dead, and claiming that until the 'Reformation' the practice was