

over the little catechism. And at last, this sincere, upright girl, told them both she would like to join them, and actually accompanied them to receive my instructions, and showed every desire to become also a fervent Catholic. The sincerity and uprightness which were characteristic in all of them were the most pleasing traits that they evinced. I grew extremely interested in this good family, and spared no trouble to clear their doubts away and make their entrance into the Church a momentous and beautiful event. In the meantime Bessie Wafford, many miles away, was praying for her fiancé, and helping him to understand the doctrines of the Blessed Church which had been her consolation and her support. She had heard from James of the wonderful events that were happening at home, and rejoiced with him in the joyful news.

Weeks passed by, and James announced that he was going to be baptised the following week. His mother told me; and I suggested she should write and tell him if he would return to his home town I would baptise him with his mother and two sisters, and two little brothers, all the family, except the father, who had held off, although tolerant of the rest.

Bessie advised James to do so, and on the day appointed he arrived home, and I had the inexpressible happiness of baptising his mother, himself, Alice, Gertrude, and the two little boys. Miss Wafford was present, and shed tears of joy. Six happy souls were given to God that day, and clothed with innocence for they had never been baptised before in any church. They all made their first Holy Communion (except the little boys) the following first Friday at my Mass, and Miss Wafford knelt beside James Dalton at the Communion rail.

The conversion of this family made quite a sensation in the little town and stirred up much bigotry, but serene and happy the new converts did not trouble themselves about what people said.

All this year Herbert West had never written to Alice, in the distant city where he went to try and forget her. But the longing to see her once more overcame his resolution, and he determined he would spend the 'week's end' at the town of X. He arrived late Saturday night, went to a hotel, and next morning went to Mass. He was petrified with astonishment to see the girl he loved, with her mother and sister, assisting devoutly at the Holy Sacrifice, and at the Communion time all three kneeling at the rail and receiving the Bread of Angels.

He could scarcely believe his eyes. He could not but dash away the tears of joy. Had the Sacred Heart of Christ heard his prayer? He had not long to await an answer.

He waited at the church door, and the glad welcome Alice and her mother gave him told him of the miracle of grace that had been wrought.

He went home with them for breakfast, and it is needless to say, their friendship was resumed. The mother could not but admire the young man for his respectful deference to the family wishes, which had now brought its reward—and Alice told him of the wonderful miracle that had happened to her brother James, through the influence of Miss Wafford, also a Catholic, and how they all revered and loved the Holy Church whose precepts and doctrines made such heroes and heroines.

The end is soon told. Before the year closed, I married Alice Dalton and Herbert West with a Nuptial High Mass, and in a certain town in Ohio, Bessie Wafford and James Dalton were married a few weeks later in the parish church of the happy bride.—*The Missionary.*

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THE FIRST TO GO

Father Dolan was surprised, amused, and a little curious as well, when he received a profoundly mysterious note from Mr. Lee, begging him to come to see him as soon as possible, but not on any account to allow Mrs. Lee to suspect that his visit was other than a chance one. Mr. Lee was not wont to be mysterious; neither was he inclined to hide anything, however trifling, from his wife. What he wanted Father Dolan could not imagine.

The Lees had lived in St. Joseph parish for many years, long before Father Dolan was sent there. People of comfortable means, they were not fashionable, or cultured, or worldly-wise. They were old now, and frail and feeble; very gentle, very loving toward each other, and not greatly concerned about the rest of the world. Their interest in many things had died with their only son, cut off in the flower of early manhood.

In his first spare hour Father Dolan answered Mr. Lee's summons. Unannounced he entered the library on the heels of the little housemaid who had opened the door for him. The old people were sitting side by side, Mrs. Lee knitting and her husband reading *David Copperfield* aloud—for the third time, as he explained later. When Mrs. Lee looked up and knew who the caller was, Father Dolan was astonished to see her quiet, patient face light up with intense joy. She said nothing beyond a few conventional words of welcome, but had he been her own child, returned after a long absence, she could not have seemed more happy.

But Father Dolan forgot her when he turned to speak to Mr. Lee. It was two months since he had seen him, except for an occasional distant glimpse in the church, and he was startled by the change those few weeks had made in him. He had grown thinner and less florid, and in some indescribable way had aged terribly. His seventy-six years, once carried lightly, now bore down upon him with crushing force.

After the first greetings had been exchanged, Mrs. Lee was almost silent while the two men talked of one commonplace and another: the weather, the crops, and some repairs being made in the church, and bravely voiced very definite predictions as to the result of a coming city election. All the time, however, it was but too evident that Mr. Lee was eager to see Father Dolan alone. So numerous were the covert signs he made, and so palpable his restlessness and lack of interest in the topics under discussion, that the priest feared Mrs. Lee would suspect that something was afoot between them. He, too, was beginning to wonder how she was to be got out of the way after she had gently said she was not tired when, with a tactlessness born of desperation, Mr. Lee bluntly suggested that she ought to rest. A moment later, in all innocence, Father Dolan asked Mr. Lee if he had ever bought a set of engravings, which he had spoken of getting from a certain English firm; and, beaming with satisfaction, the old man rose instantly, saying that he had them in his room and would be delighted to show them.

On the stairs he talked volubly and loudly about them: after the top was reached they were forgotten. He led the way to his room and closed the door, and, when he spoke again, it was hardly above a whisper.

'I am glad you came. It was very kind. I knew I could count on you. We must not let my wife suspect anything, but—I'm sick, Father. The doctor says I have organic heart trouble and may drop off at any moment. He says that I must not go to church any more—the exertion is too great. I'd like to make my confession now, Father, if you will hear me, and will you bring me Holy Communion sometimes? You could manage so that Mary would suspect nothing, couldn't you? I've tried to think of a plan and can't. Ever since I began to feel so badly, we've had a great deal of abominable weather—I've made it my excuse for not going to church. Why, it hasn't been fit even for her to go, well as she is!'

Dr. J. J. GRESHAM

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