

Little did the priest know what an instrument of graco these words were destined to become. But as with him, so with us, the little things we think not of are often the means employed by the Almighty to spread abroad the light of faith and to lead wandering souls back to Him.

As she opened the door of the house, her mother took a bottle from the shelf above the stove.

'There's the medicine,' she said joyfully. 'I told you I'd get it to-day. You must take some right away, and then you'll soon be better.'

Looking around the room anxiously, the girl's quick glance soon told her that there were only three chairs in the room now, where this morning there had been five. She said nothing, but she felt her heart sink as she realised how poor they were fast becoming. Silently she took the medicine her mother held out to her, thanked her sweetly, and then, recollecting the 'good evening' of the priest, she said:

'Oh, mother, I saw Father — this evening, and he spoke to me. He is the only person besides you who ever speaks kindly to me. I don't see how his religion can be bad and wicked as we are told. Anyhow, I know that it hasn't made him bad yet.'

'No telling what it may do, my child,' said her mother. 'Those Catholics aren't to be trusted. I've heard awful stories about priests that don't say anything good about them.'

'But, mother, do you think all these stories are true? You know people tell lies sometimes. They've told frightful ones even about us, and surely we don't harm any one.'

'No, no, my child, God knows we haven't. But these Catholics —' Here she shrugged her shoulders and was silent.

'I don't think we really ought to believe what people say of Catholics. I know some Catholic girls who work in the factory with me, and they're just as good as the other girls. Annie Hanin, a Catholic girl, gave me half of her lunch the other day when I forgot mine. They don't hate us; they can't. I don't believe it, and when I get a chance I'm going to ask Father — about his religion. I'm sure we can believe him.'

Summer came and went; autumn succeeded, with its falling leaves and chilling fogs. She had been feeling quite well during the summer months, but when the damp weather returned the cough came with it.

Finally she had to give up her work. The world was fast gliding from her. She was obliged to remain in bed. Her weekly wages ceased. Death from starvation and from cold stared her in the face.

She dreaded death; she knew not what it meant. She had never been taught to look beyond this life, to live for something higher and nobler. She had heard several ministers preach, but they had given forth no definite, tangible belief in life beyond the grave.

One morning she called her mother and said: 'I would like to see Father —. Please go and ask him to come and see me. I'm sure he will if you only ask him.'

Mrs. Margrave demurred at first, saying that no good could ever come of it, but seeing the earnestness of her daughter, and hoping to please her, she asked the grocer downstairs to go for the priest.

The priest came an hour later.

'Good evening, madam; you sent for me?'

'Yes, sir.'

'What can I do for you? Do you go to the "Aphonsus" Church?'

'No, sir; but my daughter, she is, and she wants to see you. She knows you, and she would feel the priest into the sick-room.'

He at once recognised in the girl the one who used to pass his place so regularly in the summer. He recollected that he had not seen her before.

'So, my child, it is you,' he said, holding out his hand to her. 'You look very sick. I know your face, but what is your name?'

'Stella Margrave, Father,' answered the girl, already feeling better at the kind manner of the priest.

'It is so kind of you to come and see me. I was almost afraid to send for you.'

'Afraid? Why—are you afraid of me?'

'Oh, no, Father; I didn't mean that. I meant that I didn't like to ask you to come to see me.'

'Well, poor girl, what can I do for you? Are you a Catholic?'

'No, Father; mother and I don't belong to any Church, but I feel I would like to become a Catholic before I die.'

'Very well, but what put such a thing into your head?'

'Oh, Father, you've been so kind to me that I thought if your religion made you so it must be good.'

'In what way have I been kind; I can't remember having done anything for you?'

'Indeed you have—don't you remember how I used to pass the church every evening and how you used to say "Good evening" to me each time? Well, that was the one kind word that a stranger spoke to me the live-long day, and when I didn't see you I came home with a heavy heart and could not feel happy.'

'I am glad I caused you some little happiness, though it was very little, indeed. But are you sincere in your desire to become a Catholic on this frail reason?'

'Yes, Father, I feel that I could be happier if I were a Catholic like you, and I wish you to tell me about your religion. I've heard some things about Catholics, but I don't see how they can be true. Can I ever become one?'

'You can. Were you ever baptised?'

'No, Father.'

'Do you know anything about the Catholic religion?'

'I have heard some things about it. Won't you have time to teach me all,' asked the girl, looking wistfully at him, for she began to think it would be impossible for him to waste so much time on her.

'Oh, yes, I'm only too glad to do so. I'll come every day to teach you.'

'Oh, thank you, Father,' said the poor girl, now in tears. 'I'm sorry to give you so much trouble.'

The priest began to speak of the religion she so longed to know and to make her own. The mother, with pinched and hunger-worn face remained, and both mother and daughter were attentive listeners to the explanation.

They were the poorest of the poor: no fire in the stove, a broken cup with water to moisten those parched lips, a low trundle bed on which lay the helpless sufferer, two rush-bottom chairs, an unpainted washstand, a narrow strip of bedside carpet, a table, and in one corner a straw mattress—the mother's bed—that was all the furniture.

The clerk downstairs was instructed to keep them supplied with groceries and fuel. The doctor was sent for. It was too late. He gave no hope of recovery.

The young girl rallied, however, under the influence of the food and warmth, and was able to listen while the truths of faith were unfolded to her mind.

As the cold weather came she grew weaker, and it was soon evident that she could not last long. Accordingly, she was baptised and received her first and last Communion.

'I am so happy, Father, now that you have made me a Catholic,' she said. Then suddenly her eyes opened wide and a beautiful smile passed over her face. It faded into deathly white.

The priest read the solemn prayers of the ritual, so majestic and consoling. As the Sacred Unction was applied, as those tender and mercy-breathing words of the Church were recited, imploring God's forgiveness for all past sins and frailties, her thin, wasted hands were joined reverently in silent prayer.

When the priest was leaving she whispered, 'Come back, Father; it won't be long now. You have been so good to me. Mother and I had to bear much in our poverty and sickness, but it is worth all these sorrows, and a thousand times more, to be brought so