

the confessor more than the layman; a word then about the opening part of No. 5. Frequent or even daily Communion is open to all, and therefore if one felt sure of having fulfilled all the requirements, one could quite safely receive frequently without asking advice; but if one wishes to act more prudently—and who would not wish to act most prudently in a matter of such importance?—and to receive greater fruit, the advice of one's confessor should be asked. Why, it may be asked? The mere fact of seeking advice is an act of salutary humility, and that is an excellent disposition: 'Lord, I am not worthy.' Again, it is an obvious precautionary measure, which enables a man to find out whether it is a good and holy motive that leads him to wish for Communion, or whether it is vainglory, mere custom, human respect, or some other human and "natural" impulse. There are times when the confessor sees, though the penitent may not see, that the requisite conditions are not present, and then it becomes his duty to prevent daily Communion. Furthermore, this consultation gives the confessor an excellent opportunity of offering sound advice as to the manner in which the penitent may derive greater profit from the Blessed Eucharist.

Nos. 7 and 8 of the Decree treat more directly of the position of religious communities, and explain themselves. 'Frequent and daily Communion is to be promoted especially in religious Orders and Congregations of all kinds. . . . It is also to be promoted especially in ecclesiastical seminaries, where students are preparing for the service of the altar; as also in all Christian establishments, of whatever kind, for the training of youth.' In the case of religious institutes, whether of solemn or simple vows, in whose rules or constitutions or calendars Communion is assigned to certain fixed days, such regulations are to be regarded as directive and not preceptive. In such cases the appointed number of Communions should be regarded as a minimum, and not as setting a limit to the devotion of the religious. Therefore, freedom of access to the Eucharistic table, whether more frequently or daily, must always be allowed them, according to the principles above laid down in this Decree. And in order that all religious of both sexes may clearly understand the provisions of this Decree, the Superior of each house is to see that it is read in community, in the vernacular, every year, within the octave of the feast of Corpus Christi.'

The Storyteller

'OLD GIGGLES' AND 'CAPTAIN BLUE'

As Emily, carrying her suit case, came down the grassy slope, she stopped, and stood a moment looking at the old house that lay before her at the bottom of 'Blue's Hole'—as the rest of the town of Welford facetiously called the hollow. Her glance swept drearily over the forlorn place, and then fastened with something like a shock of disgust on a queer figure in the doorway.

Some words the girl had said at the time of her mother's second marriage, five years before, came back to her: 'As if it wasn't bad enough to be a Blue at Blue's Hole without marrying a Witham—and Old Giggles at that!'

Among the townspeople the nickname, 'Old Giggles' had quite supplanted Abel Witham's right name. It had been bestowed on him for his habit of chuckling behind his hand whenever he was embarrassed. That trick, added to his singular dress and shiftless ways, had gradually gained for him the undeserved reputation of being half-witted.

He chuckled now at the sight of the girl.

'I guess you ain't come home none too soon, Emily. Your ma, she's got to be considerable of an invalid.'

'No wonder!' Emily's tone was withering as she glanced about. 'All the same, it was pretty hard on

me to have to give up my place just as I was beginning to get somewhere.'

She brushed past him into the house, and went to her mother, who, seated at the window in a broken rocking-chair, had been watching for her.

'It's lucky you've come, Emily,' said the sick woman; and then began to cry querulously.

'Of course I had to come as soon as I got your letter. Are you worse, mother?'

Emily bent over the dishevelled figure in the chair with a feeling of unspeakable discouragement. It seemed that even a Blue need not have come to this. Her mother's hair hung about her face and her faded print wrapper was not only ragged, but dirty. Everything about the room, from the broken chair to the rusty cook-stove, spoke not so much of poverty as of neglect and 'slackness.'

Presently Mrs. Witham raised her head, and met such a look of distress on her daughter's face that she tried feebly to be cheerful.

'I ain't so bad now, Emily, but land! I feel so good for nothing. If you hadn't come home, I couldn't have kept my head above water much longer, I guess.'

'You must lie down, mother. I'll get the bed ready.'

Emily opened the door into the little bedroom off the kitchen; she gasped when she saw the dust and disorder within.

'Mercy, what a looking room! You'll have to let me put you on the lounge till I can clean it up. Doctor Kennard is coming to-night, and I can't have him see you in such a hole as that. Wait, I'll brush your hair and bathe your face and hands, and get you out of that dress!'

Mrs. Witham breathed a sigh of relief when at last she found herself lying in a clean bed in a tidy well-aired room.

'I didn't know whether you could find any clean sheets; Abel does 'mix things up so when I'm sick. Why, I do believe you got them out of your trunk; it came yesterday. This must be one of your own night-gowns, too, Emmie. What handsome trimming!'

Doctor Kennard's verdict, although not alarming, was in a sense discouraging; it destroyed Emily's last faint hope that she might be free, after she had nursed her mother back to health.

'There's nothing serious the matter,' he declared. 'She's not fit for hard work, that's all. But with somebody to look out for her and make her life easy, she will get along comfortably, and live out her days.'

His keen eyes studied the girl for a moment. Since she was fifteen years old he had not seen this daughter of the Blues—the race of ne'er-do-wells, second only to the Withams in shiftlessness; somehow she upset his conviction of the utter worthlessness of the family.

The doctor departed: Old Giggles stood in the kitchen door, looking at the supper-table.

'I'd kinder got used to thinkin' I was chief cook and bottle-washer myself,' he explained with a chuckle.

'The house looks as if you had been—a little too long,' Emily retorted. 'I wouldn't have believed a human being with two hands could have put up with such a state of things.'

'City folks are mighty finicky,' observed Old Giggles, with calm disdain.

The next morning Emily faced her new life with set lips, but a sinking heart.

'The house could be cleaned—if only I had a Hercules to do it. The farm could be made to yield us a living, if I could get it worked. But Old Giggles is hopeless. And he's part of the life here; he can't be weeded out and thrown away.'

As she went about her work she watched the man curiously. He seemed to do nothing all day long, and he did his idling in the most shiftless and exasperating fashion. Everything about the place was going to waste. The farm was uncultivated; thirty fertile acres were overrun with moss and blueberry bushes. Old Giggles sat in the barn door and whittled; in answer to Emily's impatient reminder that it was time to begin