

and thirsty land for the help of man, who is apt to be discouraged, if perpetually told that everything really important and interesting happened once for all, long ago, in a chill, historic past. It is the Mass that matters.' So wrote a few years ago the distinguished essayist, Augustine Birrell, now Chief Secretary for Ireland. A Catholic can read into these striking words a deeper meaning than was ever intended, when he remembers the Real Presence, where our Saviour

'Through ever swift vicissitude
Of changeful time, unchanged had stood,'

and the Holy Communion, which enables him to be united in sacramental union with his God.

The queen of English poetry, Alice Meynell, published in the *Dublin Review* of October, 1911, a short meditation on the Eucharist. She explains in chaste, concise language how the devoted Lord, though multiplied for Communion, is yet ever one and unparted; how those who receive are all fed at one only board

'I saw the throng, so deeply separate,
Fed at one only board,
The devout people, moved, intent, elate,
And the devoted Lord.

'Oh struck apart! not side from human side,
But soul from human soul,
As each asunder absorbed the Multiplied,
The ever unparted Whole.

'I saw this people as a field of flowers,
Each grown at such a price,
The sum of unimaginable powers
Did no more than suffice.

'A thousand single central daisies they,
A thousand of the one;
For each, the entire monopoly of the day;
For each, the whole of the devoted sun.'

The Storyteller

MY GODCHILD

I looked up from my work. It was the scent of violets which roused me—real Parma violets, like a breath from a spring garden. The mere opening of the door would not have caused me to look up; for I was very busy over an article which had to go to the printers next day.

My visitor entered unannounced and handed me her card. I looked at her and remarked—somewhat tartly, I fear:

'I think you have made a mistake.'

'You know Lady Elton,' she answered. 'She told me to come to you. Her card, you see, is with mine.'

I took the card, and then stood staring helplessly at the girl. Her appearance was so remarkable that it staggered me. (I may as well admit that I am an old maid, with Old-World notions.) The perfume was well enough; but her face! The paint and powder! Such coloring could not be natural, and such beauty and dress were certainly out of place in my sanctum. Uncharitably, I concluded that they belonged to a world not to be touched by my virtuous, if dowdy, skirts. I pointed an indignant finger toward the door. But the girl stood her ground bravely, smiling a whimsical little smile.

Then I relented. For all its make-up, there was something so good and honest in her face that, when I had time to study it, I knew my suspicions to be groundless, and I motioned her to a chair.

'You must forgive my intrusion,' she said sweetly, as she sat down, 'but Lady Elton told me to come to you. You see, I want to become a Catholic. I have been instructed, but I want some one to be my sponsor and to help me through. Lady Elton thought that perhaps you would be so kind.'

I looked at the girl, at her dress—'creation' I suppose it ought to be called,—at the golden curls, at

the impossible fairness of her skin; and once more my equilibrium was disturbed. My spiritual vision refused to see grace penetrating through such a crust. She noticed my hesitation.

'Perhaps you think I am not in earnest,' she said. 'I suppose I seem very worldly.' (I saw her eyes travelling over my uncompromising flannel blouse and tweed skirt.) 'Perhaps I am worldly; but, if so, I want to be better. I am an actress, and I must stick to my profession, because it is my only chance of bread and butter. But I want something to help me keep straight. It is not easy on the stage. Life is so hard.'

Then I saw that there were tears in her blue eyes, and my heart was won.

'Poor child!' I said, sitting down on the couch beside her, and taking her hands in mine. 'Forgive my coldness! I did not understand. You must tell me all your troubles. I am only an old maid, but we women all have mother-hearts when once they are touched.'

Then she told me all about her life, and I understood, too, how God's ways are not our ways. And I realised that I, wrapped up in my own self-righteousness, knew really very little about life's struggles and dangers. Sheltered by faith, protected by the circumstances and limitations of my life, what did I know of those worlds within our world, where souls are tossed about in the stormy waters of unbelief and sin! In the midst of the storm this child had kept her little barque afloat, and God was bringing it safely into port.

Poor girl! How rashly I had judged her, and how my heart went out to her, now that I knew her story! We chatted together long and earnestly; my work was forgotten; the press and its requirements at my hands seemed sadly insignificant to me, now that I was brought face to face with living 'copy.' From that day we were fast friends.

Some weeks later we were once more together, this time in a convent chapel. My friend knelt beside me, waiting for her Baptism. She wore a simple white muslin frock; her sunny hair was smooth and braided; her fair complexion was untouched by cosmetics; her whole appearance was so modest and childlike that there was nothing to offend even my rigorous ideas of the right and fitting. But as I looked at her in her simple garb I had to acknowledge that it made her more dangerously beautiful.

I could see that she was praying earnestly. When the time came she read her confession of faith bravely, and begged humbly to be admitted to the Church. Then the saving waters flowed over the fair head and the garment of innocence was laid on her shoulders, for she had never been baptised before. At that moment I seemed to see her soul pure and lovely as the soul of a little child; and, in the ardor of my joy, prayed that it might be preserved so at all cost, even at the cost of pain and sorrow to myself. Then, with a heart full of happiness, I rose to follow her out of the church. Before she left she laid a bunch of lilies upon our Lady's altar.

That day she spent with me. My little home offered an assured retreat, where the world and its claims could be forgotten. We passed some peaceful, happy hours together. She amused herself turning over with a child's curiosity all my poor treasures. But in the evening the stage claimed her once more, and robbed me of her presence. I did not fear for her soul's safety, feeling confident that God would guard her as His own; but it seemed a desecration, and I could not reconcile myself to the cruel fate which bound her to a life so full of danger.

For weeks I had not seen anything of my godchild, when one morning, as I was feeling unusually weary and depressed, the perfume of Parma violets once more invaded my little sanctum, and she stood radiant before me.

'We are going to have a holiday—a real holiday,' she said. 'We shall spend it in the country together. I know a delightful spot, where we can dream and talk, and wander in the woods, and enjoy ourselves in your own quiet way. Say you will come. I have set my heart upon it.'

'Yes, I will do so gladly. I have been longing for a day in the country, and longing to see you.'

"Pattillo"

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