

The night comes dark, and o'er thy way
Big clouds are gathering wild!
Great God! Protector of the world,
Guard Thou both wife and child.

And fain would have the good ship turn
And bring mine back again.

Sail on, brave ship; a priceless stake
Is on thy fate for me!
May angels waft thee on thy course,
And calm each threatening sea!
Sancta Maria! to thy care
Are child and mother given,
Whether we meet again on earth,
Or meet our next in heaven!

Like miser watching from the shore
The argosy that bears
O'er ocean paths to distant lands
The treasures prized of years,
I sit and gaze, through streaming eyes,
Across the darkening main,

A Complete Story

YVONNE'S DREAM

(By MARY JANET SCOTT, in the *Missionary*.)

Yvonne glanced up and down the street, which looked as dismal as only a cobbled street can look, as the great drops of heavy rain splashed down upon the time-worn stones.

She was standing at the round window of the little inn, waiting for her father to come and fetch her in the old green cart drawn by the apparently immortal "Jaco." Yvonne's heart was like the street; the big drops of disappointment were splashing down into it, and it was not on soft ground they fell.

Six months ago she had left her father's house to join the children of St. Francis, whose work is amongst the poor heathens. And three days ago the kindly-faced, soft-voiced Reverend Mother had told her that her place was not with them, and that on Thursday morning her father would meet her at St. Gabrielle's, the old Breton town near her home.

"But, *ma Mère*, I am very happy here—it is true that the Mother-Mistress does not seem to like me, but when I am professed that will be over."

"Yes, and then perhaps someone else will 'not like you,' as you call it—what then?"

Yvonne did not answer and the other went on:

"No, my child, it is not a question of liking; you think *Mère St. Genevieve* does not like you—why?—because she tells you your faults—that is pride. You will have to overcome that before ever you can do anything for our Lord."

Yvonne was deeply hurt, and the cobbles in her heart grew harder, as disappointment rained down on them. She had yet to learn that it is only love that can wear away the hard stony pavement of our hearts.

The sound of hoofs on the road made the girl turn round, and she caught sight of the well-known grey horse, and beyond him, her father's rosy face smiling as he drew nearer, for he loved Yvonne and was rejoiced to have her back once more. True, he had listened with reverence when M. le Curé had told him of the honor our Lord had done to his family in selecting Yvonne as His spouse, and he had tried to be glad—but—well, there was the child herself standing in the doorway—and he was glad now at all events.

The old cart stopped and Yvonne clambered up beside her father.

"Art glad to be home, little one, eh?" the man said, looking hard at her. "Thy mother

will be pleased to have thee; the children are a handful when she has so much to do."

Yvonne's heart sank. How she hated the old round of daily duties—the boisterous children, the washing days, the feeding of the pigs and poultry, the deadly monotony of the simple village life! It seemed cruel that her one chance of escape had been so rudely cut off—she who had meant to do so much for our Lord out among the poor blacks.

Yvonne was very pretty and very engaging and had lived upon a little shrine all her life, and had had no little incense offered before her, till she had come to see everything from her own point of view only, and to believe that she was the centre of her own and other people's lives. She was quite sure now that *Mme. la Supérieure* was wrong, and that they would soon regret having sent her home. She wondered even how long it would be before they realised their mistake and asked her to come back to the lovely convent, where everything was spacious, and the chapel lovely and bright, and the singing in which Yvonne joined, like a chorus of angels, and there was always news of the foreign missions to fill the minds of the young aspirants. And never once did Yvonne suspect that she thought all this because she wanted to go back to a life that was more agreeable to her tastes than her home life.

She was strangely silent on the way home, and old Jules put it down to the atmosphere of sanctity from the convent that still hung around her. When they arrived at the small farm house, her mother was not so enthusiastic about the halo round her daughter's head. She was a practical, hard-working woman, who believed in doing your duty as God gave it to you to do, and she knew very well that it was no effect of holiness to be sharp with the little ones, or to sit dreaming in the church instead of driving the goats in from the hedges where they were browsing.

She shook her head when she heard from M. le Curé that Yvonne wanted to go to another convent.

"Let her be content at home first, M. le Curé—doing her duty here, she stays, and then I'll believe that she'll stay in any convent."

M. le Curé looked at the woman; it was the first time he had realised that perhaps Yvonne was not quite so flawless at home as she looked in her white Child of Mary's veil,

walking in the May procession, or singing before our Lady's altar in the church.

He said no more of the convent to the mother and daughter, but he was somewhat dismayed to hear that Yvonne was constantly to be seen walking with Lucille, who was at home for a vacation, she being a lady's maid in Paris.

The two girls seemed inseparable, and the old priest's heart was sad. Yvonne was always a good child, regular at Mass and the Sacraments, but Lucille—well, it was not her fault, poor child; left without her mother early, in the care of a drunken father. Then came his second marriage, and a hard time for his little child, and finally no one knew how, or by whose means, she was off to a situation in Paris, and now here after four years she had come to see her grandmother, and astonish the village folk by her airs and graces and the fashion of her clothes and hats.

To Yvonne it was a revelation. It was her first glimpse of the world of pleasure, and it was not long before she came to know that it was the one thing her soul longed for.

Hitherto she had seen no means of breaking her bonds save by entering a convent; now truly she was being shown the glory of the kingdoms of the world, and hearing specious promises of possessing all the pleasures thereof.

Mère Jules shook her head, and M. le Curé prayed longer in the little church, before the tabernacle, but to no one would Yvonne listen except Lucille.

How should the old-fashioned villagers know the great world when they had never been in it? And she ran off to meet her friend and hear more of the wonderful shops and cinemas and pleasures of the gay capital.

It was close to Christmas and after the New Year Lucille was to return to her situation—or a new one; no one was quite sure on the subject—and she had promised to obtain one for pretty, graceful little Yvonne, who was scarcely more than a child in years, and a veritable child in worldly wisdom.

But all this was a profound secret between the two girls, for Yvonne had sense enough to know that her parents would not have permitted it. Then came the questions of money—Lucille looked doubtful when Yvonne told her that seven francs was all she possessed.

"Seven francs for the journey and all the new clothes you will want—it is not a fortune—I must think."

Next day she appeared radiant.

A friend (Lucille seemed to have many mysterious friends) would lend the money—Yvonne could repay it when she had earned some. It all sounded very plausible.

Christmas Eve came, and Jules and his wife went off to Confession with the elder children. Yvonne's mother looked at her.

"Wilt thou come with us now, or later on?"

"Not now, mother—I must finish ironing my petticoat."

The family went out, leaving her alone with the little ones.

She was hot and tired when at last she put away the irons, and she sat by the fire near little Yves' cradle, rocking it occasionally when the child cried.