

# The Miracle of St. Cecilia.

"Remember that thou hast but one soul, that thou canst die but once; that thou hast but one life, which is short, and peculiar to thyself, and there is but one blessedness, and that for ever; and thou wilt despise many things."—S. Teresa.

From the convent they could easily discern the long white road to St. Prirat. From thence, in the morning, they might remark a peasant woman in a scarlet cloak, or a priest with a staff, or two travelling nuns with baskets, or a weary pedlar with a pack of the sun-baked roads to the gate.

From its high windows they could see the sun flash on the sea; and the gulls quiver on the wing; and the brown fishing boats roll lazily over the water; and in the silent nights near the breakers roar over the beach.

Now, the sisters of St. Cecilia were very poor. And though they talked and prayed and kept long vigil their poverty was still bitter upon them. Bare, unlovely walls in their chapel; little to give in charity, and even a broken organ in their oratory—their cup indeed seemed full.

Their Father Elias only was hopeful.

"I have been meditating," once he told the prioress with a little smile of pleasure, "of a means of mercy in our perplexity. An organ, for its cost, we know is not possible. But in Paris I have a friend who is a painter of beautiful things. I will ask him to come to us, and, by the holy grace, print on our bare ceiling a picture of great joy."

Forthwith he wrote to his friend, and the artist, sated with the city's pleasure, welcomed a diversion so novel. He locked his doors and kept the secret of his retreat that he might not be troubled. Assuredly he would point on their ceiling, and it should be a study to him for a greater picture.

Thus, three days later, the famous M. Rochemont, a member of the French Academy, arrived at the convent, and took up his abode with Father Elias in the woods.

On his way thither he passed the sisters in the garden, and some wondered at his "fine city clothes. He was no ordinaire of nature's handiwork; but a great man in Paris and honored among the great.

Moreover, in a time he threw off his modish graces and came to the chapel in his tattered sketching jacket. He would paint on their ceiling, "The Assumption of the Virgin," and he should come and go as he wished.

"I shall need a sitter," said the painter to his friend.

"From the convent?" asked the priest in perturbation.

"From the convent," said the painter, "and we must find a face—rare, poetic, beautiful, the face of the Madonna."

So the priest came to the prioress, and she, the mother, was in grave quandary. There was no precedent in the order, no reference in the constitution, to such a request. And to the father she confided her doubts.

"He is a great painter," answered the priest, "and he is my friend. And as he noticed her distress, he added, 'And attending sisters shall be by that it may be seen.'"

In this way they won her assent, and on the morrow the painter stood aside near the chapel door as the meek nuns singly passed him; and as they courted they drew back their veils, that he might clearly see their faces.

Thus they passed him; some in the black habit of sisterhood, and some in the grey of their novitiate.

At length he bent his head to the mother:

"Madam," he said, "I would wish for my sitting the lady passing now. Her face to my sense, is nearest in fancy to that of Your Lady."

And the Mother Prioress touched the arm of a novice and whispered that the choice had fallen to her.

Rochemont commenced his task in the early morning. At the last the attending sister was dispensed with; for other eyes, he said, were distracting to his work. Fr. Elias he saw scarcely ever, for he, being but a visiting priest, was often away.

She stole in by the private door near the altar, and stood by the rude wooden seat he had prepared for her. In a while she sank to her seat, as he signalled her, but with no blush, for of this she had no understanding.

She sat as he sketched her. The coarse linen coil was taken back that she might the better see her face. Her hair was close and only little curls grew about it, and she, the youngest among them, appeared but a child.

He worked on and wondered if her eyes would ever be lifted to him. She had drawn in her soft sandals under her habit, and was looking towards the altar of her Lady. He was glancing away that she might sit without feeling any eyes upon her. At last she lifted her face and looked full at him; then dropped her eyes and turned away her head.

"Could you, little lady, seem less sad?" he said at length. "Let your thoughts be solemn, if you wish, but do not frame your face so woefully, and your beautiful hair, what of that?"

"My hair is so arranged," she answered simply, "that I may lose no

time in dressing it."

Some jongleur or wandering minstrel might have sung past her cell in summer nights, and but for this and the voice of her priest, she had never heard the voice of any man. "I trust you are not tiring?" he asked her many times, and this simple courtesy puzzled her.

On the morrow again he spoke to her in some common way, but she replied:

"Our Mother Prioress has ordained that we keep silent from compline to the end of sexte—which is at noon by our bell. Yesterday I sinned, but alas! I had forgotten."

So he worked silently on, and left her at noon. But when it came that he had finished his sketches and was painting from his ladder, and she sat in the little railed gallery, he walked the woods in the mornings, and the sittings came about after the chant of Angelus at noon.

"A grand lady," once he remarked, "would expect to be paid for this trouble in grand compliment. So I might tell her that to strive for her picture were futile. For such cupid lips and enchanted eyes were not for canvas. But, as you are but a little lamb, I will tell you none of these things."

"If they are not true things," she asked, gravely, "why do you tell them ever?"

On his palette he was mixing colors and sighing for the unattainable tint.

Then he laid his palette aside, and took a flower from his coat.

"In reply," he answered, gravely, too, "I offer you a white rose, which, little bird, is quite a true thing."

In doubt she asked:

"Is this necessary?"

"I assure you," he replied, and tossed the flower with a cry of "Pardon!" into her lap. And she took the rose and idled with it, but being a summer rose and in bloom, it fell away in many pieces which littered her habit. She shook the leaves, and they fell to the floor.

"Is there no value in what I give you?" he said.

She looked at him wonderingly:

"God gives the roses which fade in the field," she said, "and roses, which ever hand may pluck them, do they not fade too?"

He made a little gesture of deprecation; but no reply.

There were beautiful stained windows which softened the garish sunlight as it settled on the sifter; and at her feet the sprightly sun-motes danced and capered on the floor.

In this and later times they talked much together; and he told her many things as one come from a far country. She despised the world, but as one unacquainted with it, for she had seen no life beyond the woods. And he spoke to her so gently as one who loved greatly and understood.

Once, when he was putting some last touches to his work, they spoke of faith.

"My faith is such that I would go anywhere without fear," she said.

"Yet would you, little lamb, dare to see this world and not be anxious?" he asked.

"I do not fear," she said.

"But would you go and return secretly," he said, "that you might trust but to the angels for protection?"

She rose from the wooden seat, and stood before him, child that she was.

"To prove to you," she answered, "who believe nothing, they say, I would venture, for I say again I do not fear."

"Come then from your cell at midnight," he whispered, "and meet me by the wood, and I will show you the world, and you shall prove all things to me."

"That he did right or wrong he did not stay to consider. He would care for her and protect her; she should see the world, as sounds and figures in a dream, and for herself she should judge. He heard her say as she left him:

"It is not sin to prove—even without permission, and so I will come, to you in secret at that hour, for I am portress at the gate this night."

The day passed, and he waited for her in a light which seemed to belong to her own world of childhood. He hoped she would come soon. He had never before met a woman who for no tangible reason made him feel ashamed of himself as he talked to her. Perhaps at this moment he rather doubted the wisdom of his escapade. Yet it was only that he wished to walk through the rooms with her and watch the wonder in her eyes. She was but a study, he tried to persuade himself, and so mere a child; and he was a great man, honored in achievement. Besides, was not adventure a privilege of genius?

Sitting himself on a fallen tree, he considered the order of his adventure. He would drive her to the ball-masque at the opera house—she as a novice to sisterhood, himself in the velvet jacket of a working painter. Simply, then, he would walk through the rooms with this girl spirit by his side, and she should return to the convent without harm or remark by daybreak. Father Elias, he knew, was asleep in his hut, and he had telegraphed his carriage to meet them here. Even now he heard the horses pawing in the road; and thirty minutes' drive away past the trees, beckoned the lights of Paris.

stars sparkled blue in the great o'erhanging firmament. It was so beautiful that she was afraid. "How great is God," she whispered awfully, "who has made this world so wonderful!"

It was at this time that Rochemont came to her side.

"Come, child!" he exclaimed, "we'll not dream now. We must hurry to return before morning."

Together they threaded their way through the path to the road. It was broken here and there by dark brushwood, so that it seemed that morsels of white cotton had dropped that they might not lose their way.

So they came to the waiting carriage with the two silent men in the driving seat; and to her it seemed a great toy. She took the seat beside him, facing the horses. The hood of the landau was thrown back, and they flew through the night. He was one who sought strange pleasures, and he exulted in this new sensation. He tried to discern her face, but it was turned from him. He could only see her chin, exquisite in contour and outline, resting on the snowy wimple.

"You are very silent," he said at length. "Won't you talk to me as you used to? You still have no fear, little one?"

"I am not afraid," she replied with a queer touch of pedantry, "because I am possessed of nothing earthly, and love nothing earthly, and fear to lose nothing earthly. Therefore, I am secure in all places."

They were rocking over rough places and she touched his arm; but he quieted her with a smile. They looked back at the convent above them. He could see the moonlight along the valley, flashing a dancing ladder to the stars. And in the convent, too, a wanderer's light was burning, and it glittered like a spangle in the crutches of the hill.

She knew the nuns were praying in their separate cells, and she knew the night flowers had opened their lips, and she believed the two would rise in praise together.

Soon the carriage wheels rattled into the city, and passed the closed shops in the heavy streets, and came to the opera house. Their door was flung wide open, and over the strip of purple cloth, they passed through a crowd of idle watchers. Many carriages had stopped that evening to discharge their freight of hooded women and lacquered men; and at the doorway they heard the jumble of street calls, laughter, and the cheery call of recognition.

Under Venetian masts they passed the portals and were swept on in the swim of the crowd.

A blaze of color, lights, and sparkling music fell on their senses. Festoons of roses hung from the roof, and all along their path were bunches of white blossom and great blocks of ice done in fantastic shapes.

Princess of blood walked with the peasants of many nations, and stately heroes of fable jostled figures infamous in history.

Zulus and Spanish Hidaigo, and the cloaks and ruffles of the Louis passed them as they stood; and Cleopatra on the arm of a frosted blue devil; and a sprightly vivandiere consorted with a black-robed public executioner. All this they saw.

One—it was a jester in tiny silver bells and two shades of gooseberry green—touched her with some laughing remark; but she stood as one in a dream.

It was the Ball of the Summer Roses, and at midnight as they passed the judges in procession, the dancers were all unmasked. Many nodded to the painter, and wondered at the lady by his side.

She wore a habit of gray freize, and the sandals of hemp, and a white cord at her waist, and the spotless wimple at her neck.

He turned to her: "Well," he said gently, "what think you of the world?"

"In this," she said, "is no love; in this there is no joy; it is sorrowful."

Suddenly there was commotion at one end of the hall, and a liveried man crossed to them; in his hand he had a folded paper. He handed the painter the paper. "To the sweetest picture of all—our Lady of the Angels—the Madonna," it was written.

"By the shade of Velasquez," he cried; "you are the very hazard of angels; for you have won the gold prize of the president."

She looked at him, and her eyes were full of questioning.

"It only means, little one, that anything you ask for to ten thousand francs is yours; that is all, simply."

"Why, is this great gift?" she asked.

"Do not question—sufficient that it is yours."

"But to you nothing has been given."

"I have already possessions—which you have not."

"We are poor, truly, and want many things. God has given this to me?" she asked.

"It may be so," he answered gently.

"I do not understand," she said. "It is wonderful. But, as anything I ask for is mine, say I would wish a new organ—in the convent of St. Cecilia at Grimont—will you tell them that?"

This he wrote on a card, and breaking from the crowd that pressed to them with felicitations, they left the hall.

They came to the carriage, and shook off the city and mounted the chalk road along the hill, but neither broke the silence. She was silent, thinking in joy of the gift that was to come, and he was silent that her pleasure might be perfect. When they came to the green larches of the wood he gave her his hand and helped her to alight. Next they came to the front gate of the convent. She lifted the great key from her girdle, whereon were the knots of the vows, and she fitted the key in the gate.

in the angels, and you say no word to any soul of what has passed to-night."

But he only saw her mount the steps and pass the little wicker-gate, and he never saw her more.

And the sister went back to her cloister, and the painter to his Paris. And it is reckoned now a miracle that on a certain morning a great van drew to the Convent at Grimont, and silent men fitted in their oratory a new gold-toned organ from the famous maker at Versailles.

Yet for ever of this miracle there are two interpretations. One is written in grave characters by the Mother Prioress of the time; but the other, and the earthly reading, is here set forth.

## BORE LIKE GIMLETS.

Lee-Metford Bullet could Go Through Entire Company of Soldiers.

The Lee-Metford bullet is about four times as long as it is thick, and to keep it straight in its flight it has to be made to rotate at a tremendous rate by the rifling of the gun. Obviously this long, narrow bullet meets with much less resistance from the air than the old spherical ball of the smooth-bore market.

But the swift rotation has another effect. When the bullet strikes a man it bores its way in like a gimlet, and nothing can stop it. As the bullet eaves the muzzle it is twisting on its axis 133,200 times per minute. This is the rate with ordinary powder. When cordite is used the bullet is made to revolve no less than 144,000 times per minute, or 2,400 times per second.

Sometimes, however, this rapid revolution brings about curious results. If it gets the least bit out of the straight line it has a tendency to glance off when it strikes a hard or tough object. This accounts for those marvellous escapes one hears of in all battles.

A Lee-Metford bullet striking a button or a soldier's belt or notebook or a coin in the pocket, when it has the slightest deflection from a straight line, is pretty sure to glance off without doing any harm.

It may even penetrate the skin of the chest, and on meeting with a rib turn aside without doing further mischief. Yet if this same bullet had struck perfectly straight it would have been able to penetrate the ribs of a whole company one after another.

## THE SWAZIE CHIEF DEAD.

The Swazie Chief Bunu must be dead. The Swazies have the habit of keeping such news to themselves for at least a month, and it is more than a month ago they were looking for a black ox-hide. Their custom is to sew up their dead King in such a skin, and place him at the foot of a kopje. Their chief General is usually killed at the same time, and his corpse left with that of the King to keep it company. Before the body of the King can be interred it has to remain for a month at the Royal Kraal, where meat is constantly burned to neutralize the inevitable odor. It is also rumored that Bunu's mother and the heir to the throne have both been poisoned; but this is not confirmed.

## DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE.

There's no use trying to do the impossible, said the discouraged religious editor.

"Oh, I don't know," replied the society reporter. It has been done. I was at the meeting of a literary club yesterday, and one lady there who read an original poem made bon mot rhyme with have got.

## A MIFAN MAN.

But is your uncle so very mean, Bertie?

Mean! Why, hang it all, he's left orders that when he dies his doorplate is to be taken off his front door and screwed on his coffin, to save buying one from the undertaker.

## Saved Their Child.

MR. T. W. DOXTATER, EXPRESSES A FATHER'S GRATITUDE.

His Little Child Was Attacked With Heart Trouble and Doctors Said She Could Not Recover—Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Restored Her Sound and Lively as a Cricket.

From the Sun, Belleville, Ont.

In a comfortable farm home in Sydney, near Belleville, lives Mr. T. W. Doxtater, a prosperous farmer and most respected citizen. In this pleasant home the heart of a father and mother beats with gratitude to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, because they firmly believe they saved the life of their little daughter. A reporter of the Sun having heard of the case drove out to Mr. Doxtater's for the purpose of getting at the facts, and found both father and mother of the little girl very enthusiastic in their praise of the medicine that has unquestionably done so much to relieve suffering in this country. Said Mr. Doxtater: "Yes, we have good reason for praising Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I think they are worth ten times their weight in gold. When our little daughter Clara was about eight years old she was stricken with what the doctors said was heart trouble. Up to that time she had been a strong healthy child. The first symptoms shown were fainting spells, and these would attack her without a moment's warning. We consulted a doctor, under whose care she was for a time, but the treatment did her no good—in fact she was growing worse. Then we called in another doctor and he frankly told us that he could hold out but little hope for her recovery. By this time she was confined to bed, and for three months was as helpless as an infant. In some of the fainting spells she was attacked with convulsions. Her appetite seemed entirely gone and she was reduced to a living skeleton. At this time I read the particulars of a cure through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, which gave me hope, and I determined that our little girl should try them. I first got one box, and when they were used she seemed brighter. Then I got five more boxes, and by the time she had finished them she was as sound a child as you could find in the neighborhood, bright and lively as a cricket. She has been going to school for the past eighteen months, and has shown absolutely no symptoms of the old trouble. I attribute her cure entirely to the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and if anyone doubts the truth of this statement you can refer them either to myself or my wife."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are just as valuable in the case of children as with adults, and puny little ones would soon thrive and grow fat under this treatment, which has no equal for building up the blood and giving renewed strength to brain, body and nerves. Sold by all dealers or sent post paid at 50c. a box or six boxes for \$2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont. Do not be persuaded to try something else said to be "just as good."

## CAUTION.

Young man, said Uncle Jerry Peebles, how do you pronounce that?

Tabby'd note, sir, replied the waiter, a recent importation from Skedunk.

Correct, rejoined Uncle Jerry, nodding his approval. Bring me that.

## A SHREWD PHOTOGRAPHER.

Photographer, to young lady. There is no need of telling you to look pleasant, miss. Such a face can not be otherwise than pleasant.

Young Lady, graciously. I will take two dozen, sir, instead of one dozen.

## HIS NEW GRAFT.

Wickwire—Look here. This is the fourth time this morning you have been in here asking for the price of a meal.

Dismal Dawson—Yep. I am the absent-minded beggar, don't ye know.



Illustration showing Buller's Fourth Advance for the Relief of Ladysmith