

Mary, whose light foot made no sound upon the walk, had reached the little carriage now, and had bent, with a mother's instinct, to see the child which lay beneath the coarse canopy, covered with a bit of woollen blanket. An inward sob stirred her as she saw how like the little face upon the poor pillow was to her own baby's face, in its sharp, pinched outline and its pallor.

"But it is too pale," she thought, and with quick alarm she turned back the blanket and touched one tiny hand. It was icy cold and the pulse was still.

As Mary lifted herself with the awe of what she had discovered full upon her, the mother raised her eyes and, seeing the tall, fair figure in white in the half light before her, with the endless pity in her eyes, she clasped her hands and half rose to fall upon her knees, supposing it to be the Holy Virgin or one of the saints to whom she had been praying.

"Your baby—"

Mary tried to speak, but her voice faltered.

The woman knew then that her visitor was mortal, and murmured in broken words:—

"Ah, madam! yes, my baby. He sleeps. So, that is well;" and she touched the yellow blanket gently, as only a mother touches her baby's little limbs.

Mary looked at her, her eyes heavy with rushed tears, doubting how to speak the truth; but when she spoke it was not what she had thought of saying, only, very softly:

"My baby is dying. I do not think she will live through another night."

"Ah, what a sorrow," whispered the other.

"Yes," Mary answered, simply. "All my babies die. I have had three. God does not give me milk for them."

"Ah, Jesu! and so they die;" and the French woman shook her head mournfully.

"I come here all the nights," she said, looking up at Mary, whose face had grown fixed and strange; "that is good for so sick babies. I stay so late; but then that policeman, he send me home. Where I live is Foundry Street. But I come back—yes, I come back. Then it shall go better with this leetle baby."

"Yes, he is asleep now, and he will not be sick any more"; and Mary drew aside the blanket.

With sudden doubt the mother bent over her child, pressing her cheek against his, and clasping his hands. When she knew that he was dead she gathered the wasted little figure in her arms with a great maternal gesture and held it close against her heart, her own face as white as his, murmuring exclamations and words of love and pity in French.

For a time Mary stood in silence by her side, touching her shoulder with one hand as if to let her know that she was not alone. Then at last she said with soft authority:—

"Now you must take the baby home—the dear little baby. I want to go with you, and my baby needs me now."

The woman lifted her head, facing Mary with eyes which had a strange, childlike piteousness.

"Will Madame tell me what I shall do?" she faltered.

For answer Mary smoothed and straightened the pillows in the carriage and made the mother lay her child back in its place, then as their hands met Mary said, as if it were a prayer:—

"God comfort you, and comfort me, and save us from what is worse than death."

Then she stood aside to give the poor mother her right to place her own hands alone upon the sacred little ark and slowly wheel it on its sorrowful journey. Thus they passed in silence, back through the saltry paths toward the Foundry street tenement.

When they reached the walk before her own house Mary pointed upward to the open window and said:—

"My baby is there."

The woman stood still, looking up through the tears which had been streaming in patient grief down her cheeks.

"Alas," she cried, "madame is an angel, and yet, such sorrows! Madame must lose the leetle child, three that madame loved:"

(To be Continued)

DUNEDIN CATHOLIC LITERARY SOCIETY.

MR C. E. HAUGHTON presided at the ordinary meeting held on last Wednesday evening, the 18th inst, at St Joseph's Schoolroom. The evening was spent in transacting business which had fallen into arrears, and arrangements gone into for making the next session still more successful than the present one.

A vote of thanks to Mr Dobbin for his excellent lecture of the previous evening was passed, and to Mr J. Hally for so kindly taking a place at the last moment in the team which met the Moray Place Society, one of the gentlemen selected not being able to be present on that evening.

The usual compliment to the chair terminated the proceedings.

REV THEOPHILUS LE MENANT DES CHESNAIS, S.M.

(From an occasional Correspondent.)

Temuka, September 21, 1895.

I HAVE no doubt the many friends of the Rev Father Le Menant des Chesnais will be glad to hear a few words about him. Since the rev gentleman's arrival here he has won the goodwill, respect and esteem of all with whom he has come in contact, and no one could possibly be so universally beloved by the people in so short a time as this good and venerable priest. We all consider it a great honour to have such a man of learning in our midst, and there is one thing which casts a shadow over our joy, and that is the fear that in a few months he may be removed from us. Since Father Le Menant came he has done good beyond measure. Besides a large amount of parish work, he has done other good work. At St Mary's, Pleasant Point, he is drawing a good number of non-Catholics to hear his learned discourses, and he has already received five into the Church. Should he remain here for some time the prospects are bright in this respect. In Temuka he is the hero of the hour on account of his lectures on "The Reunion of Christendom." These are being attended by a large number of non-Catholics and sceptics, some of whom come from a distance of fully six miles. Those who can appreciate things above the ordinary (Protestants) pronounce these lectures the ablest they have ever heard, and some of them have said they could listen to them for four or five hours. On the whole, Father Le Menant has done much good to Catholicism, and I have no doubt that all will join me in expressing a wish that he may be long spared to do good work in the Church, in which he is a great ornament.

FIRST COMMUNION AT KERRYTOWN.

(From an occasional Correspondent.)

Temuka, September 21.

Last week was rather a memorable one for a large number of children at Kerrytown, when they made their first communion. They had been prepared for this great act by the Rev. Father Le Menant des Chesnais, by a retreat extending over three days. On Thursday was the grand day. Mass was celebrated at half-past eight, when an efficient choir rendered appropriate hymns. Miss D. Hoare presided in her usual efficient style at the organ. Father Le Menant preached a sermon on the "Blessed Eucharist," which was characteristic for its simplicity. The first communion spectacle was very impressive. The girls were dressed in white, with flowing veils, and wreaths of flowers, and lighted candles; and the boys wore sashes. After Mass the children were taken to a marquee (kindly lent for the occasion by Mr. M. Scannell, of the Wallingford Hotel, Temuka), which had been erected near the school, where a sumptuous breakfast had been prepared for them by the ladies of the congregation. Misses Hoare, Stevenson, Mr Sullivan, Coughlan, and Brosnahan were most indefatigable in their attention to the wants of the children. At half-past two o'clock a grand procession, with banners, etc., gracefully waving, was held round the convent grounds. The procession over in the school a renewal of baptismal vows was made. Father Le Menant again preached an impressive sermon on "Perseverance," and the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament brought a happy day to a close.

All who do business with the Live Stock General Insurance Company of New Zealand will have their claims promptly and satisfactorily settled. The advantages offered by the Company are most deserving of attention.

Messrs A and T Inglis invite inspection of their spring and summer novelties, a shipment of which has just been landed by the firm.

It should be good news to agriculturists that the price of the Malden Island guano has been reduced. The valuable properties of the manure are universally acknowledged.

It is announced that by the instructions of the directors of the Otago Farmers' Co-operative Association, the executive committee will make arrangements to start the business at once.

It is whispered that the resignation of Bismarck's son-in-law of his post at the State Foreign Office, Berlin, is the opening scene of a determined campaign against the Emperor on the part of the ex-Chancellor. Some small writings of William II. are in Bismarck's possession, and their publication would be most disagreeable to the Kaiser.

The last vestige which bound Strasburg to France will soon disappear. The old picturesque bridge of boats which spanned the Rhine between Kehl and Strasburg is doomed. The word "France," which was on one of the centre planks and cut the river in two, marked the frontier. This was the only means of going from Strasburg to Kehl and vice versa for those who loved to go on foot across the poetic Rhine and have a glance at the blue Alsatian Mountains. July 22, 1870, just twenty-five years ago, the Badense, who from the 15th had been massed on the right bank and half the bridge which belonged to them, swept in by the railroad bridge from Strasburg to Baden. The Strasburgese who up to this felt he was a Frenchman, will not see the foot bridge disappear without keen emotion.

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