

Such conversations came often now in our intercourse. The subject of the Church as a divine teacher took precedence of all others with me; that admitted, everything else came as a matter of course. Still, I was much interested in seeing what the Scriptures said of other Catholic dogmas, and my surprise was great to read in them all that the Church teaches in regard to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. I saw that they said she was full of grace, blessed among women, that the Lord was with her, and that the Holy, which should be born of her, should be called the Son of God. I saw, too, that Mary herself had said that all generations should call her blessed. When I read these things I felt as if I had read before with my eyes only, and not with my intelligence.

But what wonderful revelations of love opened up to me when I read, in this new light, the promises of our Lord when He instituted the sacrament of His Body and Blood! I wondered how I could ever have thought that such strong, simple and plain words, such solemn and wonderful words, could mean nothing, or the very opposite of what they said.

I had not as yet spoken of these thoughts and conversations to my parents, for it all seemed so strange and unexpected to me that I scarcely knew where I stood.

I still watched my friend to see what were the fruits of Catholic faith. I found her life most edifying, and step by step I was led on, until I felt that I must ask my father for that privilege of liberty of conscience that, as a Protestant, he could not reasonably refuse.

I knew that I should pain him to the heart's core, and he was a most loving father: but God's claims were first, and it had to be done.

How well I remember that evening when I first opened my heart to him! With the blood of the Puritans in his veins, and the faith of the Puritans in his heart, he walked before God, according to his light, pure, upright, and devout. He had, outside of his life-long prejudices, a very logical mind, and he was true now to his principles. With a sad heart he gave me the liberty I asked, only begging that I would wait awhile and read more, and talk with those whom he would bring to me.

My father thought that I was influenced by the power which Catholic worship has over the senses; but though I felt deeply the great beauty of the Catholic liturgy, and was impressed by the music and paintings and architecture, still I was too much my father's daughter to be led by these things; it would have to be the head and not the heart or imagination that would take me into the Church.

The annual conference of ministers was now about meeting, and we always entertained some at our house. When they came and heard of my state of mind, each one made an effort to enlighten me in regard to the truth. The minister of the church which we attended, too, had many talks with me. My father was not always well pleased with these conversations, for one of them admitted in one of them that he had always believed that purgatory was a very reasonable, and almost necessary doctrine, and another would not admit that the words, "the Church is the pillar and ground of truth," could be found in the New Testament, and was very uncomfortably silent when they were found.

Those were painful days, full of discussions and controversies, in which, though my arguments prevailed, none the less did my heart suffer. I think the last point was reached when my mother, who followed more her impulses and emotions, said that she would rather see me dead than to see me a Catholic.

I had before this been presented to a Catholic priest, dear Father Starr—so gentle, so kind-hearted! I remember well my feeling of surprise, mixed with a little bit of humiliation, when he gave me a small catechism to read and study. Dear little catechism! How I learned to love it! In simplest words, that a child could understand, was the whole Christian faith given by Christ to his apostles to teach and to preach. On every page was text after text of Holy Scripture, the two going together—the written word of God and the living voice of the Church.

Time passed on, and I felt that the final step must be taken. God had given me the gift of faith, and I must now profess it before God and man; so at the altar of God, one Sunday after Vespers, I was made by baptism a child of the Holy Catholic Church. I was at this time about seventeen years old.

What can I say of the new life into which I now entered? It almost seemed as if our Lord were living in the world again, and that I heard his voice day by day, receiving from his very hand the wonderful gift of his own Body and blood. The world with a divine and infallible teacher, and our Lord truly present in the sacrament of his love, was indeed a very different world; it seemed almost heaven on earth.

Many years have passed since then, and every day I have thanked God more and more for this gift above all price—the gift of faith.

And here the story of my conversion should properly end, but there are one or two incidents that happened later that I would like to speak of.

About two years after my conversion my mother said to me one Sunday evening: "I have had a very strange interview this afternoon. A lady met me as I came down the steps of the church, and asked me if I had not a daughter who had become a Catholic. When I replied in the affirmative she said she had two sons who had become Catholics, and one of them was studying for the priesthood. She said it might be a consolation, under the circumstances, for us to see each other and talk together. She walked with me some distance, and told me that although she felt this change of faith in her sons very much, still she would not, by a word even, bring them back, if she could. They were happy and full of peace, and she thought they could serve God where they were."

I listened with interest, and was glad of the interview, hoping it might be some comfort and help to my mother. I had almost forgotten the whole incident, when one evening, at the house of my first Catholic friend, who was now married, and while we were celebrating, by a little festivity, the baptism of a son for whom I had been godmother, a gentleman called and was presented to me.

I found that he was a convert, and was soon convinced that he was the son of the lady who had had that interview with my mother. Had he, I wondered, heard my name or of my conversion? He spoke of his brother, to whom he was deeply attached. He was studying abroad, and was soon to be ordained a priest. I was very much interested, for converts in those days were not so frequently met with as now, and it was a pleasure to me to hear how they had come into the Church.

Our acquaintance ripened, and ended in our receiving together another sacrament of the Holy Catholic Church—the sacrament of Matrimony. The dear brother is now an influential priest, whose writings are well known both here and abroad.

I think I should beg pardon for introducing these last incidents; but since I write as an act of thanksgiving I could not pass over the temporal blessings that followed my coming into the Church: for our Lord's promise was fulfilled to me, that "every one that hath left parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, or lands, for the kingdom of God's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold in this present time"—may He grant me the grace so to be faithful as to obtain the rest of the promise!—"and in the world to come, life everlasting."—From the *Catholic World*.

For Our Young Readers.

IRISH LULLABY.

Husho, husho! Winds are wild in the willows,
Birds are warm in their downy nests—every bird but you;
King's children wake and toss on silken pillows,
You have but a broken roof to keep you from the dew—husho!

Husho, husho! Rain falls cold in the city,
Here rain falls kindly, warm on sleeping eyes;
Husho, husho! even clouds take pity
On my vourneen deelish, and leave you silver skies—husho!

Husho, husho! Silver skies to sail in,
In a boat of amber, warm as any nest;
Ah, but can my cushla find no place to wail in
But the warmest place on earth, and that her mother's breast?
Husho, husho!

—NORA HOPPER, in *New York Tribune*.

A CHAPTER ABOUT CHILDREN.

"You have quizzed me often and puzzled me long;
You have asked me to cipher and spell;
You have called me a dolt if I answered wrong,
Or a dunce if I failed to tell
Just when to say lie and when to say lay,
Or what nine-sevenths may make,
Or the longitude of Kamtschatka bay,
Or the I-forget-what's-its-name lake.
So I think it's about my turn, I do,
To ask a question or so of you."

The schoolmaster grim he opened his eyes,
But he said not a word from sheer surprise.

Can you tell what 'phen-dubs' means? I can.
Can you say all off by heart
The 'onery, twoery, hickory ann!'?
Or tell 'commons' and 'alleys' apart?
Can you fling a top, I would like to know,
Till it hums like a bumble bee?
Can you make a kite yourself that will go
Most as high as the eye can see,
Till it sails and soars, like a hawk on the wing,
And the little birds come and light on the string?

The schoolmaster looked, oh very demure,
But his mouth was twitching, I'm almost sure.

"Can you tell where the nest of the oriole swings,
Or the colour its eggs may be?
Do you know the time when the squirrel brings
Its young from their nest in the tree?
Can you tell when the chestnuts are ready to drop
Or where the best hazel-nuts grow?
Can you climb a high tree to the very tip top,
And gaze, without trembling, below?
Can you swim and dive, can you jump and run,
Or do anything else we boys call fun?"

The master's voice trembled, as he replied,
"You are right, my lad, I'm the dunce," he sighed.

—E. J. WHEELER.

EXERCISES FOR THE TONGUE.

Repeat the following sentences rapidly and see whether you can get your tongue back to its original position:—
Six thick thistle sticks.
She sells sea shells.
Short Susan threw some snow balls.
Flesh of freshly fried flying fish.
The sea ceaseth and it sufficeth us.
High roller, low roller, roll over.
A barrel of mixed biscuits, a mixed biscuit box.
Strict stroig Stephen Stringer soared slickly six silky snakes,
Swan swam over the sea; swi .. swam, swim; swan swum
back again; well swum swan.

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